**University of Alberta**

# AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF THE MUSICAL PRACTICES OF THREE EDMONTON MENNONITE CHURCHES

by

©

**Jonathan Mark Dueck**

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy**.

Department of Music

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**Date**: May 7, 2003

Wybe Adam von Harlingen, where are you now?
Only the memories of songs remain.
*Rudy Wiebe, "Sailing to Danzig," River of Stone, 1995*

University of Alberta

Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled **An Ethnographic Study of the Musical Practices of Three Edmonton Mennonite Churches** submitted by Jonathan Mark Dueck in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy**.

Regula Qureshi (Supervisor)

Beverley Diamond

Harvey Krahn

Michael Frishkopf

Wesley Berg

Adam Krims

Date: May 5, 2003

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife, Celia Mellinger
and to my grandfather Ben B. Dueck.

# Abstract

Mennonites are a non-conformist Protestant religious group, consisting of a diversity of ethnic and religious sub-groups and concomitantly diverse musical practices. However, commitment to broader Mennonite identity is strong, and is expressed through musical practices. In Edmonton, Alberta, the three major Mennonite groups of North America live in close proximity to each other, and though these groups differ in musical practice, they worship together once a year and perform together in that worship service.

This is an ethnographic study examining the role of musical practices in social structure and identity construction for three Edmonton Mennonite congregations, representing each of the major North American Mennonite groups. The author is also Mennonite and thus the study is influenced by the dynamics of insider research. The study argues that insider fieldwork engenders an understanding of groups as composed of diverse subgroups, problematizing an outsider perception of a group as relatively unified.

The study suggests that music's contribution to identity is best understood by beginning with a consideration of multiple registers of identity socially deployed by individuals, and related musical practices, and examining the musical role of the individual within a group frame. It suggests that music for the Edmonton Mennonites contributes to a complication of identity in that musical practices allow churches to differentiate themselves from each other by their choices and evaluations of genre, and helps connect Mennonites nonetheless by allowing for shared musical practices.

# Preface

I offer this short preface not to summarize the thesis content, but instead to give some personal background showing why I wrote the thesis in the way that I did. The major themes of the thesis are the ethnography of music as practice and social structure, the relationship of music to complex individual identity, and the role of musical genre in constructing group identity.

I am Mennonite in background, born to a Russian Mennonite father and a Swiss Mennonite mother. When I was 6, my family moved from the Swiss Mennonite context of Hesston, Kansas, near Wichita, to rural Southern Manitoba. The change was profound, for a 6-year-old. The Hesston Mennonites lived in a semi-urban (or rurban) environment and spoke English. Gretna, our new home, was a town of 300 people where Low German (a language I had never heard) was spoken on the playground of my school. Music was a major part of my entrance into what was then a new and strange culture for me. I found affirmation and a niche in small-town Manitoba as a singer in church and in Mennonite school choirs.

I was motived to study music as a practice and a social structure by a desire to understand the places where I myself came from. I certainly experienced music in church and school as a particular social structure with associated social groups and practices — a "practiced place" where I fit. In writing this thesis, I wanted to understand the social worlds of Mennonite music-making — both worlds which were close to my own, such as choral singing, but perhaps even more those that were distant from my own, such as Christian popular music and chorus singing. I wanted to share these understandings in part as a way of "giving back" to Mennonite readers, because I felt I had been given many gifts by other teachers and learners of Mennonite music.

I was influenced by the variety of identifiers which can be applied to my own family — Canadian and American, Swiss Mennonite and Russian Mennonite, from Kansas, from Manitoba — to understand identity as mutable, multiple and rooted in the individual (or perhaps the family) and their journeys, both geographic and personal. As I travelled, learning and practicing music in different places, I learned that identity changes depending on the context in the life of the individual. In Canada, I was sometimes seen as American, and in Mennonite contexts sometimes (though infrequently) as Swiss Mennonite, and the bearer of a Swiss Mennonite musical practice. In the U.S. I was seen as Canadian and Russian Mennonite, and the bearer of a Russian Mennonite musical practice. My own sense of identity as a Mennonite musician changed, as my social context changed.

There is a Mennonite "universe" in which a person can be involved, with different groups in different places. These different places are not unaware of each other nor each others musical practices. As a student at the General Conference Canadian Mennonite Bible College (CMBC), I considered the music practiced across town at the Mennonite Brethren-affiliated Concord College to be somewhat suspect. In chapel worship, Concord College students sang Christian popular music which was in ill favor at CMBC. Of course, when I studied across town at Concord later on, my experience of this music and evaluation of it was more positive. In the course of the writing of this thesis, I came to understand the musical debates between these different Mennonite contexts in terms of a theory of genre. Together, these contexts share a universe of musical values which become a site of contest and consequently, of identity formation for Mennonite groups (and of course for many other kinds of groups).

Of course, I did not come to the writing of this thesis with these ideas fully formed. On the contrary, the musicians and churches which I encountered and wrote about in the thesis have given me new understandings of my own story, its songs, and its people.

# Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the help of my supervisor, Regula Burckhardt Qureshi, my supervisory committee, and of all the church people who've helped in the production of this thesis. This thesis would also not have been possible without the financial assistance of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

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# List of Audio and Video Examples

*Audio and video examples are found on the accompanying CD, in Apple Quicktime 6 format. The CD can be used on both Windows PC and Apple Macintosh; if you have trouble playing it on your PC, however, a newer PC or any G3 or higher Macintosh may be able to read it. The required player may be downloaded for free from this address:*

`http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/`

*Each example file has a "chapter track"; to navigate to specific sections of the example, view the title of the track and then click on the appropriate chapter name in the drop-down chapter list on the right-hand side of the Quicktime controls.*

CD Audio Example 5.1: River West Christian Church performing

"I Will Rise Up," by Michael Ash, copyright ©1999 Maranatha Music.

CD Audio Example 5.2: Thirsty Child performing"I Will Rise Up"

CD Audio Example 5.3: Calvary Chapel performing"I Will Rise Up"

CD Audio Example 5.4: Maranatha Praise Band performing"I Will Rise Up"

(`Audio_Examples_RWCC`)

CD Video Example 4.1: First Mennonite Church Music 1/14/01

Prelude

"We Gather Together." Text and tune *Nederlandtsche Gedenkclank*, 1626. *Hymnal: A Worship Book* #17

"O Thou in Whose Presence," Text Joseph Swain, 1791; tune *Christian Lyre*, 1831, harm. J. Harold Moyer 1965. Harmonization copyright 1969 Faith and Life Press / Mennonite Publishing House. *Hymnal: A Worship Book* #559

"Lord, You Sometimes Speak in Wonders," Text Christopher Idle, 1966, copyright ©1969 Hope Publishing Co.; tune Christopher Johnson, 1987, copyright ©1988 Christopher Johnson. *Hymnal: A Worship Book* #594

"You are salt for the earth," Text and tune Marty Haugen, 1985. Text and tune copyright ©1986 G.I.A. Publications, Inc. *Hymnal: A Worship Book* #226.

(`Video_Examples_FMC.mov`)

CD Video Example 5.1: River West Christian Church Music 5/27/01

Prelude. "Glory, Honor, Power," by Danny Daniels, copyright ©1991 Vineyard Ministries International

"King of Love," by Kevin Johnson, copyright ©1997 Kingsway's Thankyou Music.

"His Love Endures Forever," by Dean Clark, copyright ©1994 Mercy / Vineyard.

"How Deep the Father's Love for Us," by Stuart Townsend, copyright ©1995 Kingsway's Thankyou Music.

(`Video_Examples_RWCC.mov`)

CD Video Example 6.1: Holyrood Mennonite Church Music 4/9/00

"Once Again," by Matt Redman, copyright ©1995 Kingsway's Thankyou Music.

"What Wondrous Love is This," Text *Cluster of Spiritual Songs* 1823; tune *Southern Harmony* 1840. Harmonized 1966 Alice Parker. Harmonization copyright ©1966 Alice Parker. *Hymnal: A Worship Book* #530

"Let the Whole Creation Cry," Text Stopford A. Brooke 1881; tune Robert Williams 1817. *Hymnal: A Worship Book* #51

"Bwana awabariki," Text and music Swahili folk hymn. *Hymnal: A Worship Book* #422

(`Video_Examples_HMC.mov`)

# Chapter 1

# Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction

> ... one of the wonderful offshoots of [choirs at First Mennonite] is the number of times that we have three generations in one choir... in September when we did this year, my entire family... were all in the choir... in fact that time in September there were actually three families like that... three entire households that were represented in the choir. (First Mennonite Church participant)

> Our music shows diversity. I have an appreciation for the more historical hymns that are part of the church's faith tradition. That would cover the whole spectrum of older hymns, as far as gospel, as well as the more German type... Yet, in my own faith journey, contemporary music is more likely to speak to my own soul... That is also part of our worship pattern here. So I actually personally feel very good about the balance that we have here. (Holyrood Mennonite Church participant)

> I understand that [our church music] changed from the traditional hymn singing to the more contemporary singing sometime before we came... I think that [these] are good changes. The singing style

> appeals to our young people who are our future. It's important that they like the music and lead us in worship. It seems much more alive and vibrant having our young people lead and participate in the worship leading. (River West Christian Church participant)

The impetus for this dissertation came about when I attended the Good Friday Service jointly held by several Mennonite churches in Edmonton, Alberta. I moved to Edmonton as a graduate student and was only beginning to be a part of the Mennonite community in Edmonton.

My background is Mennonite, but Edmonton is not a major centre for Mennonites, unlike Winnipeg, where I had lived before. Though many might think of Mennonites as a religious group in the singular, Mennonites are in fact a network of diverse smaller groups and individuals, strongly or loosely tied to a broader "Mennonite" identity. In Winnipeg, different Mennonite groups lived in a state of semi-separation. The evangelical Mennonite Brethren lived on the northeast side of the city, and people who were part of the Canadian Mennonite Conference, of whom I am a part, lived on the south and centre-west side of the city. The phenomenon of the inter-Mennonite Good Friday service certainly existed, but these services took place between churches which were from only one rather than both of these groups.

Thus, it took me by surprise when the inter-Mennonite Good Friday service in Edmonton was held at the secular, public space of the University of Alberta, by Mennonite churches belonging to each of the different groups I mentioned above. A variety of musical styles was present in the service, evidencing a diversity of beliefs and of social networks. At the same time, the choice to hold such an inter-Mennonite service seemed to affirm a common identity, which might be summed up by the phrase, "we are all Mennonite."[1]

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[1] It might be pointed out though that a more realistic version of such a phrase could read "We are striving toward a common Mennonite identity."

At first I reflected that this diversity-in-unity was probably the result of the small size of the Mennonite community in Edmonton—under 10 churches—so that in order to have a sizable Good Friday service, several congregations from different groups would have to be involved. However, on attending and being part of this service, I became fascinated with the idea that these diverse groups would perform a common Mennonite identity through this music.

## 1.2 The Topic: Music and Identity in the Life of a Church

Anthony Seeger (1992, 90) proposes six basic questions which, he argues, underlie most questions asked in musical ethnographies. Several of Seeger's questions bear mentioning here: what are the motives for or functions of particular musical performances by particular people and groups, what is the relationship of music to other social processes, and what is the effect which musical performances have on all persons and groups involved with them.

The preliminary questions motivating my research when I began work on this dissertation were similar: I wanted to discover why different Mennonite churches, in their own opinions and in mine, performed the music that they did. I wanted to understand the role which music played in relation to processes of identity formation in these groups, and particularly in their identification of themselves relative to each other and their shared urban environment. I wanted to know how this process of identification was performed musically—how it worked affectively in the performances of the musicians who led music and in the performances of the congregation. I also wanted to understand the ways in which a "Mennonite" musical tradition—a tradition with strong connections to "Mennonite" identity—was instilled in musicians, and how this tradition was transformed or constituted by those musicians, both leaders and congregational singers.

All of these ethnomusicological questions, both Seeger's foundational questions and the specific versions of these questions which I propose above, can be related to the basic preliminary question which the Good Friday service prompted me to ask: what is it that happens when Mennonites—in events which define them as Mennonites—make music? These basic questions became fleshed out through the processes of fieldwork, which as will be discussed below, was in some sense an experience of making the familiar strange for me as an insider researcher. By attending worship services and discussing with participants aspects of music important to their identity, I arrived at the following three topical foci for this dissertation based on the dialogue between my preliminary questions as a Mennonite researcher and the participants' feelings concerning music, which were sometimes quite different than that which would have been suggested by my preliminary questions.

Firstly, I present ethnographic studies of musical practice in three particular churches, examining the ways in which music helps make up the social fabric of a religious community, rather than being only a byproduct of this fabric. Secondly, I study the relationship of musical practice to the sense of identity held by members of each church. Lastly, I examine the relationship between practices of music in worship and the negotiation of group identity through choice and use of genre. Because these topics deal with group identity as experienced by individuals, I pay attention both to private individual understandings of, and public group practices of and statements about musical practice.

## 1.3 Insider Research, Mennonite Music, and Me

My interest in this topic undoubtedly has to do with my own Mennonite background and experiences of church music. I grew up in Southern Manitoba, a strongly Mennonite area, in a family which both attended a Mennonite church and worked at Mennonite schools. I attended a Mennonite high school and Mennonite colleges, and sang in church and school choirs during this time. All my musical training, as a singer and conductor, came about in these environments.

Music was, in the Southern Manitoba context, a strong marker of who we were as Mennonites. Two examples of this in my own experience stand out. Firstly, while the churches in Southern Manitoba performed music similar to the musical spectrum which is represented by the churches studied in this dissertation, my own church performed mostly four-part hymns with piano or organ accompaniment, as well as classical music solos and choral pieces.[2] Our church membership included many of the music teachers from the surrounding area, and we prided ourself on our musical sound. For me, and I would surmise for other members of the church, the difficult music which our church could perform and the wonderful warm sound and corresponding feeling of communal worship which would bathe us each Sunday morning were signs of our Mennonite authenticity. A rumor circulated that other churches would at times call our church, which was at the liberal end of Southern Manitoba Mennonite churches, "the church that doesn't believe in the Bible."[3] For me as a child, though, our musical practice spoke unequivocally of our Mennonite past and present, versus the more evangelical Mennonite churches in the area who performed gospel and sometimes Christian contemporary music.

Secondly, as a singer in the Mennonite Collegiate Institute high school chamber choir, I felt that our music was symbolic of what was good and noteworthy about Mennonites in the wider context of Manitoba. We, a small school in a rural area, entered our chamber choir in the Winnipeg Music Festival competition, and on several occasions won competing versus large city schools. Our excellence in choral singing seemed to show forth what was valuable about our Mennonite faith and ethnic heritage – the public valuing of our worship practice of hymn singing.

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[2] While the term "classical music" technically refers to a specific period of common-practice European music, in this dissertation I use it in its popular sense of Western art concert music.

[3] Although members of my church may similarly have thought that the other churches were un-Biblical, we were in the minority and thus did not publicly express any such feeling. The comment that we did not believe in the Bible referred most likely to our relatively liberal positions on theological issues being debated in the early and mid-1980s, such as the ordination of women, for example. However, the coincidence between a relatively liberal theological outlook and a self-consciously traditional way of Mennonite singing was important to me as a child at this church. It is also a pattern which, as will be suggested in the ethnographic narrative, occurs at other Mennonite churches.

I brought to this project a fairly strong history of involvement in Mennonite music-making and a knowledge of several different Canadian Mennonite groups. I also brought my expectations and biases about the value and relationship to a Mennonite identity of the various kinds of musics Mennonites perform today. I brought my background of experiencing identity through musical performance in the community surrounding my own. My interest in the project stemmed from a desire to understand why music was so important to me and to my church in the context of our surrounding society, and to examine the role of music in conflict and contest between Mennonite churches over what Mennonite churches are and should be.

The predominant field of inquiry for North American ethnomusicologists has been of groups other than their own, generally research by Westerners in the non-West. However, there are a growing number of examples of insider research among ethnomusicologists (Nketia, 1974; Loza, 1993; Browner, 2002), as has been and continues to be the case in Europe with folk music scholarship (Bartók, 1981; Pettan, 1998). While this growing body of work illustrates that attitudes concerning insider research are changing among ethnomusicologists, the prevailing belief has been that objectivity is compromised when studying one's "own" culture, so that little new will be learned from such a study. This view parallels that of many anthropologists, which has been strongly opposed by George Marcus (1986); Marcus argues that anthropology is in the end cultural critique rather than fact-gathering.

As such, insiders have both advantages and disadvantages in studying their own culture. Ethnomusicologist Mellonee Burnim (1985) has observed that, when studying one's own group, the ethnomusicologist necessarily realizes that she is both insider and outsider, both part of the group and its concerns, and an ethnomusicologist addressing the concerns of the scholarly community. A recent article by Chou Chiener (2002) extends this discussion of fieldwork roles by suggesting that the insider researcher role differs from that of the insider learner: when a musical learner in the tradition becomes an ethnomusicological scholar of the tradition, they find that they are treated differently by other insiders.

On the other hand, the field of Mennonite studies has been largely pursued by insiders. In part, this may have to do with the sometimes Western-oriented disciplines in which most Mennonite studies takes place, including sociology,[4] theology, literary criticism, and creative writing, in which insider research is either the norm or at least assumed to contribute to the credibility of the writer. Arguments within Mennonite studies concerning insider scholarship, when they have taken place, have focussed on the idea that to speak for a group, a writer must at least have a profound stake in the group and thus insider status is a positive.[5]

In terms of my own experience, I believe there were both benefits and problems in my role as insider researcher. The benefits were significant: insider background and information helped me to form relationships within the churches, and to make informed analyses of musical practices there. On the other hand, this strong connection to Mennonites at times proved problematic, limiting what I could do as a fieldworker. For example, though it would have been more useful for fieldwork data for me to video record church services from the front of the church, I was aware that this would be offensive and thus recorded the services from the pews instead. Though it could be argued that all fieldworkers should be respectful in this manner, I suspect it is felt as more imperative for fieldworkers who are studying their own community.

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[4] Here I am suggesting not that sociologists always study their own ethnic communities, but that sociologists have often studied their own nations and hemispheres rather than as a matter of course going "elsewhere."

[5] Concerning insidership's role in literary criticism, that is, in discourses of literary authenticity, and its relationship to Mennonite literature this idea is well articulated and critiqued by E.F. Dyck (1998).

Whatever benefits and problems are represented by insider research, such research also engenders different challenges and questions from that of traditional fieldwork. It is a different "project" from that of the traditional ethnomusicological researcher, where a central challenge is the translation of the different culture, the different music, the different social roles into the ethnographer's own formulation of these differences. Then, the ethnographer translates their understanding into the categories of their discipline for a mostly Western audience.

As an insider, prior to beginning formal research I had my own internal understanding of the culture, music and social roles of Mennonite church music practice, and questions concerning these, and furthermore I had pursued formal study of Mennonites and was influenced by the categories of the field of Mennonite studies; as a student of ethnomusicology, I had also internalized the analytic categories of this field. My challenges differed from that of traditional fieldwork, as such; I needed to examine my already-held assumptions in light of my experiences and observations as a fieldworker, in a familiar space newly construed as "the field."

Analyzing and constructing an ethnographic narrative from this data also presented a challenge different from that of outsider research in that I needed to "translate" my understanding of the field not only for an audience of outsider academics but also for an audience of insiders, including both Mennonites at the churches with whom I discussed my thoughts and shared my findings, and Mennonite studies scholars. Because of the partial overlap between my intended audience and the participants and other insiders, I felt that my research was not ethically problematic as I made a genuine attempt to study and represent the concerns about music of the participants. However, because of this attempt to represent the participants' views, it was tempting to become an apologist for the community rather than to reflect critically on musical processes within the community.

As this suggests, the role of insider fieldworker for me brought about questions concerning the impact of my research and its utility for the communities which I studied which centrally shaped my research. I hope that Mennonites, Mennonite scholars, and ethnomusicologists will all find this dissertation to be useful. I am indebted to both communities, but in the end I as the writer am responsible for the success or failure of my attempts to produce a reading which is interesting to both audiences.

## 1.4 The Setting: Three Mennonite Churches in Edmonton

The Western Canadian city of Edmonton is the urban frame for my ethnographic narrative. Edmonton is an oil-boom city, with a metropolitan population of about 892,000 (University of Alberta Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, 2001). It is the capital of the province of Alberta, and a major educational centre, claiming among other institutions the University of Alberta. Both Edmonton and the province of Alberta had been enjoying record economic growth and development at the time of fieldwork for this thesis (1998-2001). Edmonton is home to a wide diversity of ethnic groups, both in very cosmopolitan neighborhoods, such as the trendy Garneau/Old Strathcona area, and in "ethnic" neighborhoods such as Millwoods with its many South Asian residents.

As a centre for Mennonite studies, Edmonton is particularly interesting in that it has a population representing all three major Canadian Mennonite groups. Holyrood Mennonite Church, First Mennonite Church, and River West Christian Church are the three congregations in which I pursued my research, representing each of the three major Canadian Mennonite groups.

Edmonton provided the unique conditions in which three Mennonite churches, each of a different Mennonite group, share institutional ties and social ties in a particular place. The University of Alberta was a draw in attracting Mennonites from each of these groups to Edmonton, as was Edmonton's role as a "gateway to the North," particularly for the Mennonites of Holyrood Mennonite Church, some of whom arrived in Edmonton after pursuing missions in Alberta's North. Furthermore, Edmonton is the major center for a relatively small "hinterland" of rural Mennonites in central Alberta, meaning that it drew Mennonites from all three groups but not so many that they each formed their own, strong ethnic neighborhoods. In other words, several unique aspects of Edmonton, including its educational opportunities, its geographic position, and the size of the Mennonite communities surrounding it, are key to the sharing of worship and identity contexts for three groups.

In Edmonton, the three groups are small enough that, in contrast to their relative insularity in other parts of Canada, they have worked together on such inter-Mennonite projects as the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, the Welcome Home Community and making music together at inter-Mennonite worship services.[6]

The three churches in which I studied differ from each other in musical style, worship style, demographics, and theological orientation. Musical styles range from popular music to mainline hymnody.[7] Worship styles correspond to those of contemporary evangelical churches and to those of more traditional non-conformist Protestant (low) churches. The members of the three churches cover a wide variety of economic classes and occupations, as well as a range of relative ethnic homogeneity to ethnic diversity within a particular church. Finally the theology of these groups aligns with a range of Christian beliefs, from those of contemporary evangelicalism to a liberal social-gospel theology.

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[6] These institutions respectively work to aid in settling and advocacy for immigrants to Canada who live in Edmonton, and to provide community support for at-risk families. During the time of my research, these institutions were jointly supported and in part, staffed by all of the Mennonite churches who are a part of my study. I am saddened to note that the Welcome Home Community lost its government funding in 2001-2002, and is operating at a very limited scope at present.

[7] By mainline hymnody, I mean hymnody which characterizes musical practice at mainline churches, referring to Christian churches which are not non-conformist, such as Presbyterian, Methodist or Anglican churches. Such hymnody is dominated by English-language hymns of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, especially those of Isaac Watts, and German chorale tunes particularly in the case of Lutheran churches.

Thus, I studied a diverse selection of three Mennonite groups and their corresponding musical practices in relation to each other and to a single urban backdrop. Through personal connections with and initial inquiries at each of the churches of this study, I was able to characterize the beliefs and musical practices of each of these churches. The three churches pertinent to this study were chosen specifically for the combination of their diversity of beliefs and Mennonite backgrounds, between the three churches, in that they reflect three major Mennonite conference groups with three different belief and musical structures,[8] and for their strong annual participation in the shared Good Friday worship service.

Several other Edmonton Mennonite churches presented more diverse worship styles and ethnic and linguistic practices, including the Edmonton Chinese Mennonite Church, the Edmonton Vietnamese Mennonite Fellowship, and the Centro Evangelistico Bet-El. Some of these congregations, including the Edmonton Vietnamese Mennonite Fellowship and Edmonton Chinese Mennonite Church, also participate in the Good Friday service. However, the churches I chose were similar enough to each other that they were a key context for each other's identity; members at the churches which I chose did not for example frequently discuss the musical practice at the churches enumerated in this paragraph in comparison to their own musical practices.

This is not to say that these churches and the churches on which I chose to focus are not related to each other nor that they are not a context for each others identity in an important sense. However, due to my own prior connections with the three churches chosen and due to my sense that they were diverse and yet closely related in terms of musical practice and identity, I chose the three churches on which the study focusses. The relationship of the churches mentioned in the above paragraph, in terms of musical practice and identity, to the other Edmonton Mennonite churches, should be the subject of a future research project – to which, I hope, the present research can contribute.

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[8] Due to the recent merger of two of these conference groups at the national level, it might be argued that these congregations represent two major conference groups; at the provincial level three conference structures remain, but Holyrood has joined the Alberta conference as of 2003. However, in the lives and folkways of the churches the former national conference structures remain influential in that these three churches understand themselves as connected to different Mennonite traditions and also relate to other churches within these particular Mennonite traditions closely.

## 1.5 Fieldwork Methods

At each church, I pursued the same basic fieldwork strategy. I first contacted the pastor or leadership team of the church, and worked through a proposal for my fieldwork with them. With their, and the congregation's, approval, I began attending the church regularly for worship, and occasionally for midweek activities, such as music practices and planning meetings. I made notes during services, often in short form on church bulletins in order to be unobtrusive, and wrote them up more fully on a computer. Most fieldnotes are stored in a flat-file computer database as a result, rather than in notebooks, and thus in this dissertation fieldnote excerpts are dated, but no notebook number is given. I also made video recordings of the musical segments of a church service at each church.

I tried, in this first stage of fieldwork, to participate as fully and openly in the life of the church as possible, to identify key musical roles and key musical processes in the church. Through personal conversations, and by observing performance styles and repertoires, I attempted to identify the social and organizational networks of the church's musical practices. Important differences existed in the ways in which my fieldworker role as a participant-observer played out at each church—from a semi-open role of fieldworker-as-observer to a very open and active role as a musician and even a music leader.

The second stage of fieldwork at each church consisted of interviews with persons who had important roles in the musical performance processes of the church.[9] I interviewed approximately twenty people at each church.[10] Among each group of participants, interviews were approximately equally divided between men and women, and between young, middle-aged, and elderly persons, and finally among the various roles which I had identified as important. I tried to learn their evaluations of the musical practices of their church, their own musical biographies and "stories," and finally, how these things "placed" their church relative to the other churches and within other networks of church-music practice. Interviews were conducted in person in numerous places chosen by the interviewee, such as coffee shops or at people's houses over supper. In the case of scheduling difficulties or interviewee preference, some interviews took place on the phone or via email.

I promised interviewees that I would use only pseudonyms to refer to them in this thesis, and so when interviews are quoted in the dissertation they are either identified with a pseudonym in the text, or simply attributed to a church member. Similarly, since multiple quotes from interviews with individuals are used in the chapters, I do not identify quotes by the date of the interview, which would identify all of the quotes as belonging to a particular person. All interviews are kept on dated email transcripts or on dated audio cassettes, which are in my possession but are not public for the reasons given above. The general dates of interviews for each church are as follows: January to August of 2000 for Holyrood Mennonite Church interviews, August to December of 2000 for First Mennonite Church interviews, and December, 2000, to June of 2001 for River West Christian Church interviews.

The last stage of fieldwork was to present a preliminary version of my findings to the church, and to hear the responses of church members to my "account" of music in their church.[11] The diverse responses which I heard underlined the salience of both individual and collective identity in church music: that is, church members had important allegiances and loyalties to the church as a whole, but also presented highly individual readings of church music practice and comments on my reading of this practice. This last stage was a valuable check on the validity of my readings of the church's musical and social systems in the opinions of church members, and also an opportunity for me to thank the church and to contribute to further conversations about the place of music in each of these churches.

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[9] See Appendix A for a consent form given to each interviewee, and Appendix B for a list of sample questions on which interviews were based.

[10] I interviewed 22 people at Holyrood Mennonite Church, 24 people at First Mennonite Church, and 19 people at River West Christian Church.

[11] Both Holyrood Mennonite Church and First Mennonite Church invited me to follow-up the study with a presentation in church, and at both of these churches I presented such a

## 1.6 Methods of Analysis of Fieldwork Data

My fieldwork methods were aimed at producing data which could address my central topics of describing music's constructive role in the social fabric of several churches and relating music to the negotiation of identity by several churches. By ascertaining who in particular was key to musical practice at a church and identifying what role they played within musical practice, I began to construct pictures of the social roles and processes by which music functioned in each church.

Firstly, my analysis of the fieldwork data focusses on fleshing out these observations concerning the key roles which enable musical practice at a church, and the key processes in which the persons who assume these roles work. I examined my fieldnotes and identified my understandings of key roles and processes. Using these roles and processes, I selected and organized interview data to present information about the important musical roles and processes for each church, attempting to show the perspectives of the performers of each role. In other words, I overlaid, in the case of common viewpoints, or contrasted, in the case of differing viewpoints, the perspectives of various individuals in order to present each part of music-making at a church.

Table 1.1 illustrates a basic analysis and presentation of roles and processes

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follow-up.

| Role Number | Role | Gender and Age | Processes |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | music leader | n.a. (adult) | 1, 2, 3 |
| 2 | accompanist or team member | n.a. (adult) | 2, 3 |
| 3 | congregational member | n.a. | 3, 4 |

| Process Number | Process | Participants |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | repertoire gathering | 1 |
| 2 | rehearsal | 1, 2, 3 |
| 3 | Sunday worship and performance | 1, 2, 3 |
| 4 | feedback | 3 |
| 5 | loop | |

Repertoire Source: n.a.

Table 1.1: Roles and Processes in Church Music

in church music. The first part of the table enumerates the roles which are important to church music practice, and crossreferences by a number what process each role performs. The second part of the table shows the processes which are key to church music practice, and crossreferences what roles participate in each process by a number. The word "loop" indicates that the processes begin again at process number one. This general pattern is similar but not identical to that of each of the churches; rather than showing an analysis of practice at any particular church, this table shows general roles and processes which must occur at each church, and introduces the idea of analyzing church music as a social structure characterized by a specific collection of roles and processes.

I use the terms "where," "who," and "what" as titles organize my ethnographic discussion. These terms used as a organizing device for ethnographic work are borrowed from Anthony Seeger's idea of a "do-it-yourself ethnography," in which basic journalistic documentary ideas are used to model an approach to writing ethnography (Seeger, 1992). I use the "who" to title sections referring to what I define here as roles and the "what" to title sections referring to musical performances and processes.

Secondly, by examining interview data concerning how participants defined genres and their experience of genres within the context of church, I try in my analysis to define both a church member's view of the genre and my own observations concerning the genres. In the ethnographic chapters, a basic definition of roles and processes at each of the churches and an example of a performance showing these roles and processes in action are followed by thematic presentations of statements of participants evaluating different genres and musical practices at their church.

Genre is the turning point in my analysis between understanding music's role in the social fabric interior to the church and understanding how music helps the church differentiate itself from or connect itself to groups outside the walls of the church building, or, in other words, music's relationship to group identity. While ethnomusicological studies have focussed on genre in terms of representative musical styles and social histories of genres (Glasser, 1995; Savigliano, 1995; Austerlitz, 1996), I take my cue from popular music studies (Frith, 1996; Krims, 2000) in defining genre as not only the collection of formal characteristics or even repertoires and systems of representation making up a kind of music, but also as the interaction of formal musical characteristics, characteristics of the performance event, and the social world of the audiences as they articulate together. Using this broad definition, I see genre as a key to theorizing both the social structures within which music operates in a church and to economic and social networks outside the church in which the church is enmeshed. I consider what identities were formed with or against broader social groups via genre, both from my own point of view and from the point of view of the participants.

Group identity and social structure is realized in personal experience, and in the church this personal experience is most often characterized as "worship." Musical genres were described as aiding or taking away from a person's experience of worship, which might be defined as an affective connection to God and the church community. By examining fieldnotes describing performances specifically in the context of the worship service and the interview responses of participants to these performances and using these statements to tease out "thick description" from my fieldnotes and videos of church services, I present my analysis of music's relationship to social structure and identity in the context of personal experience.

My statements about group identity are intended to be an "account" of the internal dynamics of musical practice at each church. Each account encapsulates one way in which various aspects of social roles and structures in the church and music's constructive role in these can be said to function coherently together. Such an account is not intended to be the final word on how music functions in churches, but represents one possible way to make sense of music's function in a particular church.[12]

In this dissertation, then, I present what are in many ways small ethnographies of three different sites. However, all three of these sites come together yearly, as I mentioned above, in a "Mennonite" performance which centrally involves music of several different genres, and worship. Describing worship in the context of this service, again by examining statements concerning musical genre and worship but specifically concerning this service, I investigate how musical genres operate between these Mennonite groups in terms of the complex negotiation of identity as a single large group and as smaller, divergent subgroups.

## 1.7 Chapter Outline

In this chapter, I have introduced the ethnographic location of three Mennonite churches in Edmonton, my own insider–outsider relationship to this fieldwork context, and my ethnographic methods for fieldwork and inductive method of data analysis. The structure of the first three chapters of the dissertation reflects this inductive approach to fieldwork, in which the analytic frame comes out of experiences of social roles and musical processes in the field. I precede my theoretical discussion of music and identity with an introduction to Mennonites and their music, since the theoretical discussion refers to and in part arises from the categories of Mennonite identity and Mennonite music.

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[12] In defining "account" in this way, I am following the unwritten ideas of former University of Winnipeg religious studies professor Carl Ridd (d. 2003). This way of characterizing the "account" also corresponds to Owen Barfield's definition of the hypothesis, that is a statement which saves the appearances but is not necessarily equivalent with truth or reality in an absolute sense (Barfield, 1957).

In chapter two I provide background on Mennonites as a group and church music as a collection of genres and forms. I begin with a sketch of Mennonite history, and of Mennonite Church Canada and the Mennonite Brethren, the Mennonite groups pertinent to this study. I then provide a historical overview of Mennonite church music practices, arguing that a pre-1960s period of common musical practices gave way to a post-1960s diversity of practices.

In chapter three, I review the literature of ethnomusicological identity studies, the ethnomusicological work to which my dissertation is most closely related, and academic literature on Mennonites, and place my thesis within these bodies of work. I argue that ethnicity must be understood as one register of identity among a multiplicity of registers of identity,[13] that ethnographic study of music as practice (with associated social structures) is the appropriate ethnomusicological method by which to study the relationship of music to such complex identities, and that genre is key to music's role in constructing identity between groups.

In chapters four to six, I discuss my fieldwork in and conclusions about each Edmonton Mennonite church. After introducing the church and my relationship to it, I present a reading of the social roles and processes of musical performance in the church. Then I present a close reading of the music of a particular church service. Finally, I present fieldnotes and interviews and my analyses of music's place in the social structure of the church and music's relationship to identity in the church. The chapters each focus on a single church:

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[13] Here I am using the term registers of identity, borrowed from educational theorist Peter Taubman (1988). While Taubman uses the term to describe fictions and their readings, I use the term broadly to suggest different aspects of personal identity which can be viewed separately as part of the makeup of a complex identity.

chapter four on First Mennonite Church, focussing on the relationship between a sense of tradition and musical change; chapter five on River West Christian Church, focussing on the relationship between broader popular-music media economies and the local practice of such a popular music; and chapter six on Holyrood Mennonite Church focussing on the relationship between a strong Mennonite identity and diverse ethnicity and musical practices.

In chapter seven, I bring the churches together by offering a theoretically informed close reading of the Good Friday service which I described at the outset of this introductory chapter. I conclude that the churches find each other to be a context for their own identity, differentiating themselves with genre as a key musical marker.

In chapter eight I conclude the dissertation, offering reflections on the theoretical relationship between music and identity, the connection between genre and group identity, and the processes of insider fieldwork I pursued. I compare the roles and processes important to each church's practice of music, and conclude that different choices of music between the churches mean that there will be different social structures for practicing that music in each church. I suggest that music both contributes to and aids in solving a complication of identity for Mennonites, in that it allows individual churches to differentiate themselves from each other by genre but at the same time allows them to affirm their connection to a practice of congregational singing. I argue that insider fieldwork engenders an understanding of social groups as composed of diverse subgroups, problematizing an outsider perception of a group as relatively unified.

# Chapter 2

# Mennonite Diversity and Church Music Genres

## 2.1 Introduction: Musical Debates, Genre and Mennonites

In this introduction, I use both academic writing and in-group sources, including articles, records in conference publications and web sites. Michael Driedger (2002), a Mennonite historian, has drawn a useful contrast between "official" texts, such as the writings of church leaders to be used by the church, and "unofficial" texts, such as the writings of individual church members. Driedger suggests that by using both kinds of sources, identity can be located between the "fixed standards" presented by leaders on behalf of and for the group and the "flexible standards" represented by individuals.

Similarly, by using such "unofficial" sources such as letters written to Mennonite news-magazines or works of fiction, I present internal debates and diversity among Mennonites. Writings and web sites by Mennonite leaders represent an "official" account of Mennonite identity.

I will begin this chapter by examining two editorials recently published in Mennonite news magazines to illustrate the importance and ubiquity of debates regarding Mennonite experiences of music and their pertinence to

Mennonite identity.[1] These editorials are writings of Mennonite leaders.

Everett Thomas (2001), editor of the Mennonite Church USA publication *The Mennonite*, ran an editorial concerning music. Thomas argues that the distinct Mennonite contribution to the Christian world is congregational singing. This is so because of the unique expression and creation of community in worship that happens at a Mennonite church service. "By learning to accept each other's preferences and eventually singing off the same page, individual tastes are subordinated to the needs of the community of faith in worship" (Thomas, 2001).

Singing "off the same page" is contrasted with the use of recorded music in the congregation, which threatens community by replacing the community-creating ritual of singing together. In a surprising turn, Thomas connects his preceding arguments to debates concerning the appropriate repertoires of Mennonite church music. Thomas concludes that these debates on what to sing are less important than the fact that we sing.

A few observations: this article begins from the premise that excellent congregational singing, like pacifism or service, is a Mennonite "distinctive," a key theological aspect of Mennonite identity. It is so because it creates community—another Mennonite "distinctive." The value of singing, then, is directly related to Mennonite identity.

Furthermore, significant debates are going on about what music to choose for the church. Alternatives to congregational singing, in the form of prerecorded popular music, are encroaching on the space normally occupied by church music. However, the article puts this argument in the service of relativizing and neutralizing another debate seen as divisive among Mennonites, that of defining the appropriate repertoire of music for Mennonite churches.

A similar editorial was run in the *M.B. Herald*, a news magazine of the Mennonite Brethren Church (Coggins, 1998). This article addresses what the author, Jim Coggins, sees as a serious divide within the church over repertoires of music: hymns, preferred by older persons, and choruses, preferred by younger persons. He suggests that the power struggles over music in Mennonite Brethren churches are often won by the older generation, but this means that the younger generation leaves to go to another church. Therefore, he argues that Mennonite Brethren churches need to embrace as broad a spectrum of music as possible.

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[1] The importance of the conference publications of Mennonite groups to their music-making has been remarked on elsewhere (Schmidt, 1998 (1990)).

Here again, as in *The Mennonite* article above, the value of singing together is celebrated. In both articles, musical debates are focussed along axes of genre (or style). Here contemporary worship music is seen as a strategically good choice, having certain attributes which are necessary for maintaining young church members and gaining new members. While *The Mennonite* article could be read as an appeal for Mennonite churches to live with the musical differences between them, this article goes further and argues that each Mennonite Brethren church needs to adopt a wide stylistic palette of music specifically including both popular music and hymnody.

Letters to the editors of *The Canadian Mennonite*, another Mennonite news publication, might represent an "unofficial" literature expressing a diversity of opinion concerning these debates. Some Mennonite church members wish for the kind of compromise which these editorials advocate, as one letter from a disgruntled father shows (Lepp, 1998). This man complains that members of his church made disparaging comments concerning his son's popular-music contributions to church services, and appeals for tolerance of popular music and hymns in church. On the other hand, some Mennonite church members feel that such compromise is totally unacceptable, as a letter from a music professor shows (Neufeld, 1998). This professor argues that the amplification used in popular-music in church silences congregational singers and destroys the sense of community created by hymn-singing. These letters show that, from the perspective of Mennonite laypersons, the agreement sought by Mennonite leaders concerning musical practices may be difficult to achieve.

These quotations from Mennonite leaders and laypersons are suggestive of a diversity of musical subgroups within the broader category of Mennonite, of the role music has in structuring congregational life, and of the strong relationship of music to identity for Mennonites. Church music is a contested terrain that impacts centrally on how Mennonites experience and construct themselves as a worship body and community.

While Mennonites are an identifiable and self-selecting religious group, there are complex layers of individual identity and subgroups within the larger group of Mennonites. Important registers of identity and difference within Canadian Mennonite circles have included gender, ethnic and linguistic diversity, denominational and conference identity as part of a history of schism, geographic identity, differences of affiliation with church organizations such as schools or missions agencies, and rural or urban identity. Music is involved in negotiating these differences between Mennonites, constructing a unique place and identity among Canadian Mennonites for a particular person or congregation.

In this chapter, I offer background information necessary to the remaining chapters of the dissertation concerning Canadian Mennonites and the genres of church music which are pertinent to Mennonites. By situating Mennonite musical practices relative to Mennonite history and self-presentation, including history and self-presentation relative to music, I emphasize the relationship of music to differences and diversity within Mennonite circles. I also define church music genres and worship service types which are current in Mennonite discourse.

## 2.2 Mennonite Church Canada and the Mennonite Brethren

Mennonites are a worldwide Anabaptist religious group (Harder, 1975, 20-22). Anabaptist refers literally to "re-baptizers," and has come to mean those churches of the radical wing of the sixteenth-century Reformation which practice believer's (adult) baptism, and often other practices, including pacifism, Christian discipleship or service, and sometimes community of goods.[2] Within this general framework, however, a great deal of diversity exists between Mennonite groups in terms of their historical stories, current self-presentation, and musical practices.

### 2.2.1 Mennonite History: Religious Origins, Ethnic Histories and Migrations

Though a detailed critical exploration of Mennonite history is beyond the scope of this chapter, the following presents a commonly accepted thumbnail sketch of histories common among Mennonite groups, from sixteenth-century origins up to the point of their arrivals in North America.

Anabaptists originated in the sixteenth century nearly simultaneously and independently in several different locations in Europe, including groups in Switzerland and the Netherlands who are the predecessors of two Mennonite groups. Their theological views, particularly belief in pacifism and the strong separation of the church from the state, were seen as subversive and earned them religious persecution. Some Anabaptist groups became known as "Mennonite" due to their early association with a common leader, Menno Simons. The Mennonite groups originating in Switzerland and the Netherlands followed histories of migrations, fleeing violent oppression in various states and also seeking more land on which to farm or other economic opportunity. While some overlap existed between the groups, the origins and histories of the Swiss and the Russian (then Dutch) Mennonites were for the most part distinct from each other, resulting in two different ethno-religious groups of Mennonites existing at present, as well as new groups of Mennonites such as Vietnamese and Chinese Mennonites which grew out of evangelical missions.

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[2] Of North American Anabaptist groups, it is only the Hutterites who practice community with all things in common, i.e. the abolition of most forms of private property.

The Swiss Mennonites, originating in Alsace and Bern, moved from these sites of origin to the Palatinate, where persecution was lessened. From the Palatinate, they moved to the U.S., as part of a broader migration of German-speaking groups, seeking land and attempting to avoid new taxes levied on them in the Palatinate. Mennonites arrived as early as 1683 in Pennsylvania. In 1786 they began to move to Canada, pushed by war in the U.S. and their pacifist beliefs (Epp, 1974, 56-57). In Canada, these Mennonites settled mostly in southern Ontario. The majority population of this group of Mennonites, however, remains in the U.S. A second wave of Swiss Mennonite immigration to the U.S. occurred between 1815 to 1861 (Falcón, 1986, 21).

Swiss Mennonites are the historical core of the Mennonite Church (MC) Conference of Mennonites. In 1860, several more liberal Swiss Mennonite groups joined to form the General Conference (GC) Mennonite Church, the main issues in the schism being a desire to expand missions and to establish Sunday School (Ens, 1999 (1989)).

Russian Mennonites originated in the Netherlands, and from there fled to Prussia where the free cities and particularly Danzig offered refuge from religious persecution. The modernization of the Prussian state in the late eighteenth century brought both pressures to join the army and restrictions on land rights for Mennonites. At this time, due to an offer of land from Catherine the Great, Empress of Russia, many Mennonites moved to Ukraine.

While in Ukraine, the Mennonite Brethren broke away from the mainline *Kirchliche* Mennonites (which later became the core of the Canadian Mennonite Conference, a General Conference group) in 1860 (Urry, 1988).[3] The Mennonite Brethren first saw themselves not as a congregation as the main Mennonites on the colony were, but as a fellowship, a less strictly organized group of true believers who voluntarily formed a religious community (Urry,

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[3] They did so in part under the guidance of a Lutheran evangelical preacher named Edward Wuest, and thus the Mennonite Brethren were at first called the Wuest brethren(Urry, 1988)

1988, 29).[4] Evangelical from their beginnings, the Mennonite Brethren pursued evangelical missions to surrounding Mennonites and Orthodox believers (Toews, 1999).

When Mennonites from Russia immigrated to North America, in the 1870s, 1890s and early 1900s, the General Conference Mennonite Church was the most successful North American group in connecting with this group of Russian Mennonites. In Canada, so many Russian Mennonites joined the General Conference that this group of Russian Mennonites came to be the majority population of the group of General Conference Mennonites living in Canada (Dyck, 1967, 199). The Mennonite Brethren, also a part of these waves of immigration, created and maintained North American conference structures, settling in the Canadian prairies and in Kansas and California.

Mennonite history, with its successive migrations away from religious persecution, is a history of religious rather than nationalist or proto-nationalist diaspora. This is not to say that national origins do not figure in to senses of identity, but rather that myths of national origin have changed over time and are particular to various Mennonite subgroups. For example, many Mennonites in Russia did consider themselves German, in part because they shared language with many diasporic German Lutherans and Catholics in Russia (Toews, 1982). However, this German identity and use of language itself came about only during their time in Prussia, after a migration from the Netherlands (Driedger, 2002). That is, Mennonites gained language and a sense of national identity from the dominant languages and national identities of various points in their histories of migration. At the same time, language often functioned as an identifying factor which referred to origins: Mennonites spoke Low German as the *lingua franca* in their context in Prussia, for example, but continued to use Dutch in worship and written communication, differentiating themselves from other Prussians (Tiessen, 1998).

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[4] Sociologist James Urry (1988, 31-32) points out that formalizing boundaries within the Mennonite Brethren in a conference structure casts doubt on the group's self-perception as a "fellowship."

In North America, the Mennonite Church, General Conference Mennonite Church, and Mennonite Brethren have adapted to mainstream, Anglophone North American society to varying degrees (Driedger, 1989). Like other non-conformist churches, all three groups of Mennonites are relatively de-centralized, being organized by conferences which network individual congregations with each other rather than by their placement within a strongly organized church hierarchy and structure.[5] This decentralization and increasing urbanization and economic integration into North American society have been balanced by the development of strong insider networks of educational and social institutions, so that Mennonites are better characterized as accommodated to North American society than assimilated into it (Regehr, 1996, 2-3). Overlaps between the various groups of Mennonites in North America have occurred through social contacts and intermarriage, and perhaps more importantly through shared missions and development projects and shared or overlapping educational institutions.

Missions have been pursued throughout Mennonite history (Dyck, 1967, 257-274). From North America, these missions began in the late nineteenth century with Swiss Mennonites, in India and urban North America (Schlabach, 1980). Joint missions projects were pursued by Swiss and Russian Mennonites through conference structures involving both Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite church groups. The Mennonite Brethren, as mentioned above, have always had an evangelical focus and from North America continued to evangelize, finding particular success in West Africa. As a result, Mennonites at present are truly a global group; the Mennonite world population was 1,059,661 in 1998, of which only 415,978 lived in North America (Driedger, 1999, 8-12). Mennonites in Africa are the fastest growing Mennonite population (Driedger, 1999, 8).

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[5] A Mennonite observer might contrast the former General Conference with the former Mennonite Church in this regard, noting that more power was accorded to the conference in the Mennonite Church and more to the congregation in the General Conference; however, in comparison with mainline churches with an episcopal structure,[6] most Mennonite groups are relatively decentralized. This de-centralization extends to the belief structure of the church; while for example, the Catholic Church and the Orthodox are creedal churches, i.e. they agree on a binding theological statement for the entire church which is relatively stable, most Mennonites adopt a non-binding "confession of faith" which is subject to re-negotiation over time.

In addition, all three major North American Mennonite groups, along with several other Mennonite groups, have worked together on the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) development and relief agency since World War I. Some have estimated nearly ten percent of Mennonites have some involvement with MCC; this widespread involvement of individuals among Mennonite groups with the Mennonite Central Committee has made the agency, and a sense of global responsibility and service, a very significant marker of contemporary North American Mennonite identity (Redekop 1989, 253-254; Driedger 1999, 231-232; Kreider 1970; Mathies 1995).

In the North American urban context, immigration, missions and broader social contacts (Driedger *et al.*, 1983) have contributed to diversity as people of many backgrounds other than Swiss and Russian Mennonite have become part of Mennonite churches and communities. Important groups of Mennonites who are neither Swiss nor Russian Mennonite include Hispanic Mennonites and Hispanic Mennonite Brethren (Falcón, 1986; Martinez, 1994) and Francophone Québeçois Mennonite Brethren (Wingender, 1994). Furthermore, some Mennonite churches, particularly in urban contexts, are not primarily Swiss or Russian Mennonite, but rather have become multi-ethnic due mainly to friendships or missions between an initially Swiss or Russian Mennonite congregation and residents in the surrounding urban area.

This is not to say that ethnicity has disappeared. In centres with high populations of Swiss or Russian Mennonites, such as Winnipeg and Kitchener-Waterloo in the Canadian context, the phenomenon of "Mennonite last names" and cultural practices continue to be an important factor in negotiating Mennonite identity; newer Mennonite groups have faced difficulty in winning recognition as equally "Mennonite." Furthermore, "Mennonite last names" and cultural practices are specific to either Swiss Mennonites or Russian Mennonites; the food and folkways of these two groups are different. For example, one interviewee described herself as "an Ashkenazy in Sephardic territory," to bring across the experience of being a Swiss Mennonite in a mostly Russian Mennonite congregation.

Let me sum up this discussion: histories of multiple origins, schism, diaspora and missions contribute to both ethnicity and diversity among, and significant connections and overlap between Mennonite groups, and in the expressive cultures of the Mennonites. In the following subsections, I will present insider introductions to the Mennonite groups which are central to this study, Mennonite Church Canada and the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches.

### 2.2.2 Introduction to Mennonite Church Canada

Mennonite Church Canada's web site introduces the denomination as a collection of identities—Swiss Mennonite, Russian Mennonite, Asian, African, Latin American, First Nations, French, English, et cetera—joined together in Christian fellowship and "moving together toward the future under the umbrella of Mennonite Church Canada" (Nighswander, 2001). This group is the result of the recent integration of the historically Swiss Mennonite-dominated Mennonite Church and the historically Russian Mennonite-dominated General Conference Mennonite Church. While both groups are multi-ethnic, as noted above, they retain a majority population of Russian and Swiss "ethnic" Mennonites in Canada.

These groups of Canadian Mennonites were both part of their larger North American General Conference and Mennonite Church bodies, respectively. These groups co-operated through a number of projects, including the Mennonite Central Committee development agency, and the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries theological school.

These co-operative ventures are cited in the Mennonite Church Canada web site as primary factors leading to the integration of the two conferences into Mennonite Church Canada,[7] following a resolution adopted in 1999 (Nighswander, 2001). The two groups shared not only a pastoral training institute and missions venture, but also a common repertoire of music first embodied in the red *Mennonite Hymnal* in 1969 (Joint Hymnal Committee, 1969) and later in *Hymnal: A Worship Book* (Slough, 1992). The *Mennonite Hymnal* was developed jointly by a General Conference and Mennonite Church committee, and *Hymnal: A Worship Book* by a committee with members from these two groups and the Church of the Brethren. In other words, though the groups were distinct, they shared identity through the registers of church institutional affiliation and musical practice.

Mennonite Church Canada's web site draws attention to the fact that the two groups collaborated in missions projects, and thus have increased in diversity through shared missions. This has meant both the creation of some multi-ethnic fellowships, and the creation of ethnic churches such as Japanese Mennonite Churches or Hmong Mennonite Churches. Rather than eschewing ethnic identity, Mennonite Church Canada embraces it both in the singular and in the plural at the congregational level and as a wider body presents itself as self-consciously multi-ethnic.

The group's theology is expressed in a shared *Mennonite Confession of Faith* (General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church, 1995). Key beliefs include the centrality of church as community, the importance of believer's baptism and of pacifism, and the importance of Christian service, missions, and discipleship—that is, following Christ in daily life. These beliefs place the group as relating most strongly to other Mennonite and Anabaptist churches. Though it can be argued that theological identity and difference are a function of other more fundamental differences, I would suggest that theological thought and change is a major causal factor for identity and difference among Canadian Mennonites, in part because of the small size of the group and the close relationship of many Mennonite laypeople to the group's schools of theology. The group's strong Mennonite and Anabaptist identity is expressed organizationally by the group's membership in Mennonite World Conference, which is a global group of Mennonites.[8]

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[7] A parallel conference, Mennonite Church USA, was formed in the U.S.

Mennonite Church Canada maintains more tenuous connections with both liberal Protestantism and evangelicalism by maintaining observer status, rather than full member status, in both the Canadian Council of Churches and the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. At present, the group is considering full membership in both groups (Penner, 2003).

Mennonite Church Canada has several affiliated educational institutions, including several colleges, high schools, primary schools, and at least one summer camp in each province or area conference. It is important to note that the two colleges most pertinent to this study exist in co-operation with the Mennonite Brethren—Columbia Bible College of Abbottsford, BC, and Canadian Mennonite University (or CMU) of Winnipeg, Manitoba. Canadian Mennonite University is the result of the federation of what were the conference colleges of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, affiliated with the General Conference Mennonite Church, and the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches: Canadian Mennonite Bible College, and Mennonite Brethren Bible College, later Concord College, respectively.[9]

The web site presents the conference as a place of unity-in-diversity: a body of Christians with diverse ethnic backgrounds and some diversity of religious views, with agreement on basic Mennonite theological principles and a strong, shared network of organizations and projects. This "official" literature, then, emphasizes both Mennonite diversity and a shared Mennonite identity for Mennonite Church Canada.

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[8] By Anabaptist identity, I mean a holding an Anabaptist theological position, which is more specific than being a member of a Mennonite conference.

[9] The inter-Mennonite Menno Simons College is also part of Canadian Mennonite University.

### 2.2.3 Introduction to Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches

The Canadian Mennonite Brethren introduce themselves in a conference-published pamphlet written by Harold Jantz (2000) entitled *Mennonite Brethren: Tell me About Them*. Jantz emphasizes at the outset that the Mennonite Brethren are a group which relates historically to Anabaptism, but which wants to "be known for what they distinctively contribute to the witness of the larger Christian church." In other words, the group sees itself as distinct from other Mennonite groups.

Jantz emphasizes both the Anabaptist and evangelical theological tendencies of the Mennonite Brethren: Anabaptist theological characteristics such as New Testament Biblicism,[10] believer's baptism, church discipline, and peacemaking, and an evangelical belief in the centrality of missions. Jantz highlights multiple organizational connections of the Mennonite Brethren, pointing out that the group is active in both the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada and Mennonite Central Committee Canada.

The Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches includes social and educational institutions. These include four colleges and three secondary schools, as well as numerous summer camps for younger children. Key among these institutions, for the purposes of this study, have been three Western Canadian Mennonite Brethren colleges: Columbia Bible College of Abbottsford, British Columbia, Canadian Mennonite University of Winnipeg, Manitoba, and Bethany Bible Institute of Hepburn Saskatchewan. As noted above, the Mennonite Brethren and General Conference Mennonite Church jointly support Columbia Bible College and Canadian Mennonite University. In this case, the groups share identity through institutional affiliation.

Jantz stresses the religious, rather than ethnic, nature of the Mennonite

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[10] New Testament Biblicism is a commonly used phrase which refers to the understanding that Scripture rather than church traditions is the guide to Christian life, and that the New Testament is the key text from which a hermeneutic for reading the entire Bible can be derived.

Brethren and the global scope of the group. Jantz points out that, globally, the largest Mennonite Brethren conferences are found in Congo and India. Furthermore, among Canadian Mennonite Brethren, the pamphlet suggests that "congregations have embraced people of a wide range of ethnic and religious backgrounds," so that in any particular Mennonite Brethren church, no one ethnicity is definitive of the Mennonite Brethren (Jantz, 2000).

This "official" introduction to the Canadian Mennonite Brethren emphasizes the ethnic diversity and doctrinal unity of the Mennonite Brethren. Ethnic identity, and thus ethnic cultural practices, are downplayed here relative to evangelical openness. Theologically and organizationally, the Mennonite Brethren here are seen as distinct and unique, but relating strongly to both evangelicals and other Mennonite groups.

### 2.2.4 Diversity and Ethnicity within Mennonite Church Canada and the Mennonite Brethren

The dynamic of ethnic diversity *and* persistent Swiss and Russian Mennonite ethnicity makes the presentation of Mennonites and Mennonite Brethren as large groups complex. As is apparent above, both Mennonite Church Canada and the Mennonite Brethren present themselves as multi-ethnic, and indeed both groups are ethnically quite diverse. Furthermore, their histories as religious groups include complicated and varied migrations and changes of linguistic and national identity contributing to the identity of a national conference, as is the case particularly with Mennonite Church Canada. Self-characterizations of the group as diverse fit theological understandings, broadly held by Mennonites, of the group as a Christian religious group rather than an ethnic group. These characterizations are not only ideologically consistent with the beliefs of many group members concerning the nature of the group; they reflect real ethnic diversity and complicated ethnic histories within these conference groups.

However, in many contexts for both groups, Swiss and Russian ethnicity remains a strong identity factor, which is not readily admitted in the way these two groups present themselves.[11] The duality of persistent Swiss and Russian ethnicity and the diversity which is a real aspect of the denominations as a whole is not easily or simply resolved.

My point in presenting self-introductions of Mennonites who make up Mennonite Church Canada and the Mennonite Brethren is not that they are never ethnic, nor that the two conferences are profoundly and basically different from each other. Rather, I am pointing out that the diversity of the groups is highlighted by the groups themselves; members of the group wish others to see them as diverse. Furthermore, the histories of the two conferences include overlaps and differences of language and migration and, as I will detail further below, musical practice. From an outsiders point of view these groups may seem "Mennonite" but to an insider there are differences which matter socially between Swiss Mennonites, Russian Mennonites and Mennonite Brethren, non-ethnic Mennonites, and within subgroups of these larger groups. As I suggested, Mennonites as a religious group are relatively de-centralized, and identity is thus often most strongly rooted in individual congregations, which rarely align simply with an ethnic or religious identity, or even a conference identity. The complex dynamic of persistent ethnicity and diversity is not possible to collapse into a characterization of Mennonites of all the varieties mentioned as ethnically singular or plural; rather, this dynamic comes into play in the negotiation of identities within and between these groups.

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[11] For example, though the Mennonite Brethren are particularly strong in their claims of multi-ethnicity, a recent sociological study by Peter Hamm (1987) included ethnicity as a important aspect of Mennonite Brethren identity.

## 2.3 Mennonite Music, Identity and Genre

### 2.3.1 Mennonite Congregational Music: A Historical Introduction

Here I will discuss Mennonite church music practices in several historical periods: pre-immigration practices, practices after immigration but prior to 1960, and post-1960 practices. Through this short discussion, I will bring out the conflict between populist and traditionalist tendencies which have existed throughout Mennonite history. Notwithstanding this history of internal conflict and change concerning music, I will also show how a period of what was seen as musical common practice for North American Mennonites gave way to the current musical diversity and a complication of identity aligned with the musical debates mentioned at the beginning of the chapter.

#### Pre-Immigration Church Music

Among sixteenth-century Anabaptists congregational singing was controversial, seen as a practice which could distract from the following of Jesus in daily life (Martens, 1999 (1989), 825). There are accounts of early Anabaptists singing hymns and Psalms, including riveting accounts of songs being sung by individual Anabaptist martyrs while they were burned at the stake. The Swiss Mennonite's *Ausbund*, which is the earliest Anabaptist hymnal, dates from 1564 (Friedmann, 1999 (1953)). Hymn texts in the *Ausbund* were written by Swiss Mennonites but the tunes are derived from popular sixteenth-century folk tunes.[12] Singing was most likely unaccompanied and monophonic, slow, and highly ornamented. This hymnal and mode of singing are still employed by the Amish today in North America.[13]

Russian Mennonites established a similar pattern of congregational singing in Danzig: unaccompanied monophonic hymns from a Prussian Mennonite hymnal called the *Gesangbuch* were led by a cantor, or *Vorsaenger*, in a call-and-response style.[14] In Russia, a singing tradition more closely related to present-day North American (Russian) Mennonite singing emerged: the singing of four-part chorales and hymns, and the use of choirs in congregational singing. Wesley Berg (1985, 16-17) locates two developments which were key to this change in singing style: first, the educational impact of a new sol-fa notation system of numbers, called *Ziffern*, and secondly, the birth of the Mennonite Brethren Church in 1860. The Mennonite Brethren Church rejected the slow style of singing used in the *Kirchliche* Mennonite group (Hiebert, 1993, 66), and adopted hymns from other pietist traditions, focussing on simple four-part gospel songs from the *Glaubenstimme* hymnal (Berg, 1985, 20). The group also used musical instruments, including flutes, violins, and harmonicas in worship which was so exuberant that they became known as *Huepfers* or jumpers (Toews, 1999).

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[12] In 1564, the Swiss Mennonites were called the Swiss Brethren.

[13] The Amish are a later group which emerged out of a schism with the Swiss Mennonite Church. They remain related to Mennonites through what Leo Driedger (1977) has called a "ladder" of identification, where Amish leave the Amish church and join conservative Mennonite groups.

Choirs, and thus the institution of the choral conductor, became established in Mennonite churches in Russia to lead congregational singing. Mennonites in Russia experienced rapid changes in musical style in the second half of the nineteenth-century, culminating in widespread Saengerfests, or choral festivals, and even oratorio performances in the early twentieth-century (Berg, 1985, 22). This development however, was largely cut short by the Russian revolution and the resulting restrictions on religious practice. At the same time, the *Vorsaenger* tradition of singing continued in some Mennonite churches.

As the historical discussion above suggests, then, folk and popular musics from the cultures in which Mennonites lived, such as popular sixteenth-century folk tunes and evangelical pietist songs with musical instruments, figured prominently in the pre-immigration development of congregational music practices and particularly of hymn repertoires. A strong choral singing tradition also developed among the Russian Mennonites. The development of this tradition itself among the Russian Mennonites was in part due to the musical background provided by the popular singing traditions of pietist hymns among the Mennonite Brethren, since singing in four parts rather than unison established a need to teach the new repertoire and way of singing, something the choir could do.

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[14] The following discussion of congregational singing and choral music among Russian Mennonites draws on Wesley Berg's account of choral music among Russian Mennonites (Berg, 1985).

## Post-Immigration: A "Common Practice Period" for Mennonites

Swiss Mennonite singing in the U.S. at first continued patterns established in Europe. However, the singing schools popularized by Lowell Mason, which established patterns of hymn-singing in parts for many Protestant groups in the early nineteenth centuries became influential among the Mennonites. In 1832 a Shenandoah Valley Mennonite named Joseph Funk published the *Harmonia Sacra*,[15] a tunebook of shaped-note tunes in harmony. The tunebook was used in community singing schools among Mennonites. In 1875 the Mennonite Publishing Company in Indiana published another Virginia Mennonite's tunebook, Martin D. Wenger's *Philharmonia*; Walter E. Yoder suggests that this book and several widely-travelled Mennonite singing-school teachers who used it "should be given credit for the style of music used in the Mennonite Church (MC) churches today" (Yoder, 1999 (1958)). While this is a broad claim, it is clear that these tunebooks and the singing-school movement helped establish a strong tradition of a capella congregational four-part singing among the Swiss Mennonites.

The first wave of Canadian Russian Mennonite immigration formed schools in Manitoba and Saskatchewan which maintained a choral singing tradition as part of school life (Berg, 1985, 43-46),[16] though many of these congregations continued the *Vorsaenger* tradition.[17] The second wave of Russian Mennonite immigration brought a second wave of Mennonites who established churches with choirs.[18] By the late 1930s choral workshops for choir training were established and the Russian Mennonite choral and hymn-singing tradition was firmly established in Canada (Berg, 1985, 68-79). From the 1940s on two post-secondary institutions, Canadian Mennonite Bible College and Mennonite Brethren Bible College, replaced the choral workshops as the primary training ground for Canadian Mennonite musicians.

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[15] The collection of church music was at first called *A Collection of Genuine Church Music*.

[16] These schools began as teacher-training Normal Schools, but eventually became secondary schools which are still an important part of Mennonite life in Canada today—the Mennonite Collegiate Institute in Gretna, Manitoba, and Rosthern Junior College in Rosthern, Saskatchewan.

Until the 1960s, the dominant body of North American hymnody for most Protestants consisted of the eighteenth-century English hymnody of Isaac Watts, and the nineteenth-century gospel hymns of Ira Sankey and Dwight Moody (Ellinwood, 1978). The *Mennonite Encyclopedia* suggests that Mennonite singing also used this repertoire:

> ...the English hymnals contain almost exclusively standard English and American hymns, supplemented by the American Gospel songs of the late 19th (with considerable influence from Ira D. Sankey's Gospel songs Nos. 1-5) and early 20th centuries. (Bender, 1999 (1956)).

The General Conference *Mennonite hymnary* of 1940 (Hohmann & tet ler, 1940) contained "the standard English and American hymns...and also a good selection of 68 of the better Gospel songs" (Bender, 1999 (1956)). It also included 104 German hymn tunes, many of which are chorales. The

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[17] Some conservative Russian Mennonite groups, such as the Sommerfelders and Old Colony Mennonites, continue this *Vorsaenger* tradition; Wesley Berg (1996) has documented contemporary performance practices of this tradition among Old Colony Mennonites.

[18] These two waves of immigration have frequently been opposed, the first being characterized as poorer and more conservative and the second as wealthier and more educated, and by implication more interested in the arts including music. However, recent social-historical work by Delbert Plett (2000) has argued otherwise. Through analysis of economic data, Plett argues that the two immigrations were not vastly different in terms of economic background at the time of immigration and that ideological reasons, such as theological beliefs, figured more prominently into the motives for immigration for the first wave of Russian Mennonites.

1953 Mennonite Brethren English-language hymnal, *the Mennonite Brethren Church hymnal, a treasury of hymns and gospel songs* (Richert & Hiebert, 1953) contained English and American hymn tunes, with a heavy emphasis on gospel songs and a small selection of some 38 German tunes. In addition, during the 1950s both the Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church published hymnals in German, containing many German chorales (Berg, 1986).

This time, then, was characterized by movements toward standardizing musical practice among Mennonites. Through contacts with wider North American society, Swiss Mennonites developed a broadly adopted four-part hymn singing tradition. On the other hand, by establishing strong educational institutions and other venues of musical education, Russian Mennonites created a four-part singing tradition common to many Russian Mennonite churches.

Members of the Mennonite groups pertinent to this study remember this time as a period of "common practice" among Mennonite groups. Mennonite Church musician Kenneth Nafziger described his church in his childhood as gospel hymn-singing done a capella, in four parts, and suggests that his church shared these modes of performance, repertoires of music, and understandings of music with other Mennonite churches in the U.S. (Kropf & Nafziger, 2001, 23-25). Similarly, Tony Funk (1998) suggests that, prior to the 1960s, "One could travel from Winnipeg to Yarrow, from Vancouver to Gem and experience the same kind of worship service [in Mennonite Brethren churches]."

I would like to emphasize that this time of common practice was not an originary tradition for Mennonites, nor was it arrived at without reference to the musical repertoires and modes of singing of other North American Protestant groups. Rather, it occurred through contacts between Mennonites and both popular and classical singing traditions of other North American Protestants, and through the development of stronger insider institutions by Mennonites for Mennonites.

## Post-1960s: A Multitude of Practices

In the second half of this century in Canada and the U.S. Mennonites have moved to urban centres in unprecedented numbers (Driedger, 1989, 35-36); Canadian Mennonite urbanization has been even more pronounced than that of the U.S. These urban Mennonites have participated in the diverse musical life of North America's urban centres. Furthermore, as has been noted, ethnic diversity among Mennonites expanded through greater contact with global Mennonites and through urban missions in North America.

In part due to urbanization and concomitantly to acculturation, the diversity of connections with broader North American society and their influences on Mennonite music became stronger in the 1960s. Russian Mennonites in Winnipeg became more active in the classical music scene due to an increase in education and connections with the wider Winnipeg classical music community; nonetheless, these Mennonite musicians maintained strong in-group ties (Schellenberg, 1968). Similarly, American Swiss Mennonite high-school musical practices were more strongly influenced by evangelical theologies from non-Mennonite groups in the 1960s (Kraybill, 1977). Changes in Canadian Mennonite Brethren churches were dramatic, with English replacing German as the primary language of the worship service and the English gospel hymn threatening the place of the German hymn in Mennonite Brethren singing (Funk, 1998).

In 1969, the *Mennonite Hymnal* (Joint Hymnal Committee, 1969), remarkable in that it was a joint project of the Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church, was published. This hymnal included some innovations, including more German music, several non-Western hymns and Anglo-American folk hymns; nonetheless, the majority of hymns in this book still came from the British and American standard repertoire of eighteenth and nineteenth-century English-language hymns (Schmidt, 1999 (1989)).[19] Similarly, the 1971 *Worship hymnal* (Hymnal Commission of the General Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Churches, 1971) of the Mennonite Brethren focussed on Anglo- and American hymnody, again with a greater emphasis on gospel songs than is evident in the Mennonite Church and General Conference hymnal.

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[19] This standard repertoire includes, as outlined above, both the hymns of Watts and Lowell Mason, and the gospel hymnody associated with Ira Sankey and Dwight Moody.

After the 1960s, popular music became a more important factor for Protestants, due in part to two important developments. According to Alan Luff (1995), a British hymn scholar, Vatican II and the Catholic folk movement hymns of Sydney Carter, new Catholic hymnody focussing on peace and justice, inspired a corresponding explosion of new hymns among Protestant writers in the 1960s, and the adoption by Protestants of many of the folk movement hymns themselves. This new repertoire was largely distributed in supplemental hymnbooks, not in the primary hymnal used by churches. Perhaps more importantly a similar movement was taking place as part of 1960s popular culture in the music of the Jesus People (Liesch, 2001). The Jesus People were an evangelical Christian subculture within 1960s popular culture, who composed and performed Christian popular songs. Maranatha Music, the most prominent publisher for Christian popular music today, began as a ministry in a Costa Mesa, California evangelical church which related strongly to the Jesus People; it published Christian popular worship songs, allowing for broad distribution of this style of music.

In the Mennonite Church of the 1960s and 1970s popular music corresponding to the Catholic folk hymn style and the music of the Jesus people were used by Mennonite young people (Schmidt, 1999 (1989)). Goshen College in Goshen, Indiana, sponsored student gatherings in 1972-1974 for which songbooks of these folk hymns and choruses were compiled. In 1975 Herald Press, the publishing house of the Mennonite Church, commissioned a songbook of these folk hymns for congregational use called *Sing and Rejoice: new hymns for congregations* (Schmidt, 1979). This songbook was used as a supplement to the *Mennonite Hymnal* in many Mennonite Church and General Conference churches. Similarly, Tony Funk (1998) notes that in the 1960s the words "contemporary chorus," referring to Christian popular worship music, came into usage among Mennonite Brethren. However, this music did not become a main part of Mennonite Brethren worship services until the 1980s when a Mennonite Brethren hymnal supplement including many popular songs, entitled *Sing Alleluia!*, was published (Hiebert, 1993, 68).

Timothy Sharp (1992) points out that radical changes in the primary hymnals of North American Protestants did not take place until the decade of 1982-1992. At this point, new versions of traditional hymns, using modified gender-inclusive hymn texts, replaced their original versions, and new "Native American, Afro-American, Hispanic and Asian hymns," which as a group, Sharp terms "international hymnody," arrived in the primary hymnals used in Protestant churches. Both Sharp and church-music scholar Donald P. Hustad (1993) attribute the presence of this "international hymnody" on the one hand to increased connections between North American churches and non-Western churches, particularly via worldwide worship gatherings of churches, and on the other to the increasingly multicultural nature of North American churches themselves.[20]

Corroborating the claims of Hustad and Sharp, Spickard (1994) offer a social-historical account of the global church, arguing that the churches which initially emerged as a result of Western missions are increasingly independent entities which challenge Western churches to a more global sense of church constitution and to concomitant changes in worship practice and economic and social work. These increased connections within the global Christian church follow the 1960s-70s transition from colonial to post-colonial world order in the non-West, and are enabled by the increase in global flows of ideas, persons and capital concomitant with new communication and transportation networks developed in the late 1970s and 1980s. I am not suggesting that a global church, or the global circulation of culture is a new phenomenon, but rather pointing out that, due to the new configurations of space as a result of postcolonialism and post-Fordism, the increase in speed of connections and communication within the global church has resulted in a higher level of global consciousness and identity complication within the Christian world.

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[20] Of course, there has been a great deal of debate in North American churches about these changes. For example, Sharp quotes John S. Tomkins, who criticized the new Presbyterian Hymnal because it omitted many of the songs he knew and loved, replacing them with more newer, more politically correct hymns. Tomkins's rhetoric is interesting: "Insensitive as it may seem, no one consulted the vast majority of the 2.9 million Presbyterians who actually sing the hymns each Sunday" (Sharp, 1992, 38). Tomkins implies that the majority of Presbyterians, insiders to the traditions and codes of the older hymnody, are being brushed aside so that the denomination can appear friendly to a minority of new folk, outsiders whose hymns now appear in the Presbyterian Hymnal.

For Mennonite church music, this transition corresponds to the passing of the red *Mennonite Hymnal* of the Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonites, to the blue *Hymnal: A Worship Book*, published in 1992. This hymnal incorporated hymns from non-Western sources, new hymns from Anglophone writers, and gender-inclusive texts for traditional British and American hymns. It also includes hymns from liturgically-oriented worship communities, including the Catholic community of Taizé in France and the Presbyterian community of Iona in Scotland.[21]

The project began in 1984, and its eight year span of work was characterized not only by inter-Mennonite co-operation, but by controversy over the inclusion of new repertoire and, most sharply, the modification of hymn texts to use gender-inclusive language. The participation of Mennonite women in this project, and the impact of the broader feminist movement, was important to the proposal and acceptance of these gender-inclusive texts. Due to objections concerning gender-inclusive hymn texts, one of the sponsoring churches—the Churches of God General Conference—withdrew from the project. Thus, both the changes of repertoire in the new *Hymnal* (Slough, 1992) and the debates surrounding it parallel those in other Protestant churches.

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[21] These worship communities have become influential through the Mennonite colleges, so that for example the Winnipeg Mennonite colleges recently sponsored a church-music workshop led by a leader in the Iona community; students at Goshen College, a Mennonite college in Goshen, Indiana, also regularly lead a worship service using the materials of Taizé.

The controversy which accompanied the production of *Hymnal: A Worship Book* demonstrates the broader Mennonite-church involvement in the production of Mennonite hymnody. Because the wider Mennonite church was struggling with gendered language in church, the editors struggled with the issue of modernizing archaic language, especially gender language, in the hymns, and in the end did so (Schmidt, 1998 (1990)).

Articulating something of a denominational difference, the new hymnal of the Mennonite Brethren, *Worship together* (Hymnal Commission, 1995), published in 1995, consists of primarily mainline Protestant hymns, although it does include some new and "international" hymnody. The hymnal was produced, however, through a careful survey process involving a large number of congregations. The task force which produced the hymnal, using statistics garnered from this survey, put together a list of the most popular hymns in use in Mennonite Brethren congregations and included most of these hymns in the hymnal (Hiebert, 1993, 65). The task force found that Christian popular music, referred to as "Christian contemporary music," accounted for nearly a third of the most-used songs. Thus, the task force included a number of these popular songs in the hymnal (Hiebert, 1993, 68).

At present, evangelicals and popular music continue to influence Mennonite music-making in church. Canadian Mennonite Brethren have moved closer in theology and musical practice to evangelicals, particularly in focussing more on gospel and Christian contemporary music (Klassen, 1995). This is true of other Canadian Mennonites as well. A survey of Canadian Mennonite church musicians indicates that these musicians today sometimes find themselves at odds with the increasingly popular taste of non-musicians in their congregations (Berg & Dyck, 1994). A recent survey of the mutual perceptions of Mennonite church members and Mennonite college students and professors shows a similar trend: while the Mennonite colleges remain important locations at which Mennonite church musicians are trained, many churches perceive the music of the colleges as too complex and heavy. On the other hand, some college students and professors feel that music of the churches has become popular and light (Klassen, 1993). At the same time, hymns remain a vital part of worship in many, though not all, Mennonite churches today, and Mennonite hymn-singing includes a far broader spectrum of hymns than had been the case in the past (Kropf & Nafziger, 2001).

A General Conference observer concluded that "Mennonite worship today is a multitude of practices looking for a theology" (Rempel, 2000). In other words, hymns as texts are bearers of theological beliefs, but this is not as important as hymns and other forms of music *as a shared practice among Mennonites*, which has yet to be theologized in a manner that accounts for the variety of practices that exist.

This history of rapid musical change in the past thirty years parallels rapid social changes in North American Mennonite churches during this time. Theological appeals from Mennonite leaders for a unified church, and for tolerant and broadly shared musical practices rather than musical "splinter groups" must be understood in this context of a multitude of musical practices.

The point I wish to draw out of this historical narrative is that Mennonite diversity, in terms of ethnicity, theology, and modes of worship, creates a complication of identity for Mennonites today. Though this complication is not a new phenomenon, it is experienced by as an important juncture for the church by insiders, and is sometimes framed by insiders in terms of a crisis. Music is part of that crisis, at times acting as a divisive force between Mennonite groups. At the same time, music is seen by leaders and some laity as a possible solution to this complication of identity. This complication of identity is the backdrop for the current ethnographic study of music in Mennonite churches.

### 2.3.2 Contemporary Mennonite Diversity and Music: Terms used for Worship Services

As should be clear from the historical survey above, Mennonites and their musical practices are diverse, as are their musical practices; this diversity co-exists with persistent Swiss and Russian Mennonite ethnicities and musical practices. The growing array of Mennonite institutions and the social groups which are linked by these institutions—the global Mennonite church, national conferences, area conferences, and local congregations—articulate diverse subgroups within the general category of "Mennonite." Individual Mennonites define their relationships to the group, and therefore the nature of the group itself, in a multiplicity of ways.

As has been argued, musical debates among Mennonites take the character of genre or style debates, most broadly between "hymns" and "choruses." Here, for the sake of convenience and simplicity, I am selecting from several possible terms the term "choruses" to refer to Christian popular music used in worship. Both First Mennonite and Holyrood would refer to this music as "choruses," but River West refers to it as "contemporary worship music," a temporal distinction which will be discussed below. Hymns and choruses, though they share the subject matter and function of Christian worship, are often contrasted in terms of the formal structure of their texts: while the term hymn usually refers to a strophic metrical song with multiple verses (and frequently a linear narrative) (Temperley, 2002; Herbermann, 1904), a chorus may have several verses but always returns to a repeated chorus part. Hymns and choruses might be also be contrasted as "old" and "new" forms of music; however, many Mennonites also consider unfamiliar (possibly but not necessarily recently composed) hymns to be "new."

The most broadly accepted distinction between the two forms concerns instrumentation and mode of performance (Newman, 2002): choruses employ an amplified popular-music ensemble, called a praise band, and popular styles of singing especally influenced by soft and folk rock, while hymns are typically sung without amplification, accompanied by piano or organ (or other classical-music related instruments.) Transgression in this regard amounts to changing the genre of a piece: for example, a hymn tune and text sung in a popular-music singing tone accompanied by an amplified popular-music ensemble backing would most likely be understood as a "chorus version" of a hymn. The reverse, though this is not as frequent a phenomenon, is also true: choruses which are notated and sung in parts, such as Christian contemporary musician Michael W. Smith's song, "O Lord, our Lord, how Majestic" which appears as hymn number 112 in the *Hymnal: A Worship Book*, are understood as hymns.

Several terms categorizing worship service types appear in writings concerning wider Protestant churches. Though these terms are not often used in Mennonite writings about church music, they are frequently used in informal conversations among Mennonites. These types include traditional, blended and contemporary worship services.

The traditional worship service refers to a service which uses primarily hymns, accompanied perhaps by a piano or organ, for congregational singing. Music which is part of the church service but is not congregational singing, including solos sung or played as "special music" or "worship music," and offertories, would also most likely be from the repertoire of hymns (including new hymns) or classical sacred music. As noted above, the instrumentation is very important in classifying the service as traditional (Newman, 2002), since hymns performed with popular-music accompaniment would not characterize a "traditional" music service.

For Mennonites, the use of the word "traditional" to classify a church service would have several other implications. First, the music would almost certainly be sung in parts; this is different from the traditional services of many other Protestant groups, in which singing could be in unison or perhaps in two parts with a choral descant. Secondly, hymns would typically be led by a conductor (often called the "songleader") and accompanied by a piano or organ if they are not sung a capella; this also differs from other Protestant services, in which hymns are often led by the organist.

Thirdly, Mennonites often use the word "traditional" in reference to a Mennonite church with a strong ethnic Mennonite centre, and the implications of the word would differ between Swiss and Russian Mennonite ethnicities. For example, for Swiss Mennonites, there would be a particular resonance with a feeling of tradition if songs were sung a capella, without instrumental accompaniment.[22] For Russian Mennonites, a choir would be important in a traditional service. Of course, as might be clear from the historical survey above, in both cases, tradition is in part invented from the memory of the past century of practice and mapped onto the more distant past, rather than in fact reflecting the original musical practices of either group. Furthermore, these musical practices could be performed by anyone in the church rather than a member of a Mennonite ethnic group and still resonate with an ethnic Mennonite tradition.

Finally, a "traditional service" in the Mennonite church would refer to a particular order in which hymns are sung, according to various functions ascribed to those hymns. Table 2.1 summarizes the sequence of events and participants in a traditional service. This pattern would be shared with other non-conformist Protestant churches, such as Baptist churches, but it would differ from Protestants who use liturgy to varying extents, such as Presbyterians and Methodists. Hymns are chosen with regard to the function of their lyrics within the worship service. A typical Mennonite traditional service proceeds as follows: first, a spoken welcome by the pastor, followed by several hymns on the topic of gathering to worship, usually called "gathering hymns." Then, announcements of events in the life of the church or church members, followed by the reading of scripture and perhaps another hymn focussed on praising God, called a "praise hymn." The sermon follows the reading of scripture, and the congregation responds to the sermon with a hymn chosen to reflect the subject of the sermon, called the "hymn of response." An offering, with

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[22] However, instruments are at present frequently used in Swiss Mennonite churches.

|  | Event | Participant | Lyrical function |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | welcome | pastor |  |
| 2 | gathering hymns | songleader / congregation | lyrics on church community |
| 3 | announcements | worship leader |  |
| 4 | praise hymns | songleader / congregation | lyrics on praise of God |
| 5 | scripture reading | reader (congregational member) |  |
| 6 | sermon | pastor |  |
| 7 | hymn of response | songleader / congregation | lyrics relate to sermon |
| 8 | offertory | instrumentalist (pianist) |  |
| 9 | sharing | worship leader / congregation |  |
| 10 | benediction | worship leader |  |
| 11 | hymn of sending | songleader / congregation | lyrics on blessing / Christian daily life |

*genre:* hymns *accompaniment:* piano, organ or a capella singing
*songleader:* pianist / organist or conductor

Table 2.1: Traditional Service

accompanying offertory music, might follow this or might also earlier in the service. After this, some congregations allow for a time of "sharing," that is, the sharing of personal thoughts and events by congregational members. Following this, there is a spoken benediction and a hymn which blesses the congregation, or focusses on continuing to live a Christian life throughout the week, as they leave the church, called a "hymn of sending."

The second kind of service, the "blended" service, refers to a traditional service which is modified to include choruses. Such a worship service follows a similar order of service to that described above. Table 2.2 summarizes the sequence of events and participants in a blended service. Hymns are used for all the functional divisions of the church service mentioned above. Non-congregational music, such as offertories or "special music," may be in either popular or classical and hymn styles. However, a praise band will lead choruses, typically as a block of several choruses, usually at the beginning of the worship service or following the announcements. Typically, these choruses will be chosen in a sequence which moves from fast-tempo songs to slower-tempo songs, a pattern which will be discussed further below. For Mennonites, hymn singing would most likely be performed in parts, but contemporary singing would be primarily in unison, with occasional improvised harmonies.

Lastly, the "contemporary worship" service employs almost entirely popular music. Table 2.3 summarizes the sequence of events and participants in a blended service. Typically, such a service begins with a spoken welcome and announcements, and then moves to music – a block of at least twenty minutes of contemporary songs led by a praise band, the leader of which is called the "worship leader," a different definition for this term from that used in the traditional and blended service. Songs are chosen and ordered by their affective quality, which is seen as related to the tempo of the song, rather than primarily for lyrical function. Typically, the worship time will begin with fast-tempo songs aligned with the affect often called "praise" or "horizontal worship," that is, worship of God together, as a church community. Then, slower-tempo songs which engender an affect called "worship" or "vertical worship," that is, individual prayer to and worship of God. Following this singing, the scriptures will be read followed by a sermon – or skit, or other alternate to the sermon. Then, there may be another contemporary song, and a benediction. The service is designed as such so that the music and sermon form a focussed emotional block, seen as a time of worship.

While the hymns and choruses debate is the most widespread and salient musical debate among Mennonites, it would be simplistic to suggest that it is the only one. Debates exist not only concerning musical choices between genres such as hymns and choruses, but choices within such genres. For ex-

|  | Event | Participant | Lyrical function / Note |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | choruses | praise band / congregation | fast tempo to slow tempo |
| 2 | welcome | pastor |  |
| 3 | gathering hymns | songleader / congregation | lyrics on church community |
| 4 | announcements | worship leader |  |
| 5 | praise hymns | songleader / congregation | lyrics on praise of God |
| 6 | scripture reading | reader (congregational member) |  |
| 7 | sermon | pastor |  |
| 8 | hymn of response | songleader / congregation | lyrics relate to sermon |
| 9 | offertory | instrumentalist (pianist) |  |
| 10 | sharing | worship leader / congregation |  |
| 11 | benediction | worship leader |  |
| 12 | hymn of sending | songleader / congregation | lyrics on blessing / Christian daily life |

*genre:* hymns / choruses *accompaniment:* piano, organ or a capella singing / amplified acoustic guitar and singers, piano, drums
*songleader:* pianist / organist, conductor, or praise band leader

Table 2.2: Blended Service

| | Event | Participant | Affect / Tempo |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | welcome | pastor | |
| 2a | worship (praise) | worship leader / praise band / congregation | fast tempo, focus on praising God together or "horizontal" worship |
| 2a | worship (worship) | worship leader / praise band / congregation | slow tempo, focus on individual worship of God or "vertical" worship |
| 3 | scripture reading | reader (congregational member) | |
| 4 | sermon | pastor | |
| 5 | closing song | worship leader / praise band / congregation | often a song sung earlier in worship time |

*genre:* choruses *accompaniment:* amplified acoustic guitar and singers, piano, drums *songleader:* worship leader

Table 2.3: Contemporary Service

ample, a glance at the hymnal now employed by Mennonite Church Canada is suggestive: it contains "African-American, Asian, Native American, Hispanic, and African Hymns" (Slough, 1992). Besides this world hymnody, this hymnal includes Anglophone hymns of the nineteenth and twentieth-century with texts which have been changed to reflect gender-neutral understandings of God and church people. It also includes new hymns written within Protestant and Catholic traditions, particularly from new liturgical sources such as the worship communities of Iona and Taizé.

As was noted above, these various distinctions within the genre of the hymn are the subject of controversies among Mennonites, and churches may lean towards one style or another of hymn. Similarly, choruses are divided stylistically, though this division is temporal. Popular Christian music from the 1960s and 70s are often called "choruses," while music from the 1980s and early 1990s is often called "praise and worship." The most current term for this music is "contemporary worship music." The transitions over time between terms used for genres here probably derives from the interaction of audience and industry, in that the media groups which publish and disseminate this music change the generic terms associated with it in order to market the music to the perceived tastes of the audience (Negus, 1996, 1999). Nonetheless, all of these terms are sometimes used to refer to music of any of these time periods. Churches may lean towards the music choices and genre names of one time period or another.

A final important key word used in debates concerning Mennonite music is "worship." Worship is what is supposed to happen, or to be enabled, in a worship service and through the musical practices of that service. The term is often used in debates concerning music to give relative value to kinds of worship services or musics, as in "I do not find a traditional worship service (or hymns) very worshipful" or vice versa.

There are a great variety of opinions on what worship is between different church groups. Many evangelicals would define worship as expressing God's worth (Webber, 2002), and conclude that the content of worship should be focussed on God. Worship should also affect the worshipper, however, so that worshippers are "time forgetting" (Rowland, 1998); critics of evangelical concepts of worship argue that evangelical worship is judged by whether or not it produces a collective emotional response among the group of church members, rather than on its participatory nature (Schwartz, 1993). More liturgical churches might define worship as a response to God's activity in our lives, enabled by the participation of the Holy Spirit in the church (LCMS Commission on Worship, 1998). As this suggests, definitions of the word are multifarious, complex and theological; this variety is likely related to the fact it is the key word by which churches and individuals evaluate their practices, including musical practices in church services.

## 2.4 Conclusion

I have surveyed the histories of Mennonite groups and musical styles which are pertinent to this dissertation. I have identified the primary arena of debate concerning music within Mennonite churches: musical style. Style is sometimes correlated to a generational register of identity: popular music with young people, hymns with older people; popular music with "the culture," hymns with traditional Mennonite practices.

Many other registers of identity may come into play in Mennonite music as a social category. Among these are registers of religious identity, including wider church affiliations (Mennonite and evangelical), particular Mennonite conferences, and particular congregations. Another register of identity might focus on institutional affiliations, including the Mennonite schools, camps, and missions and development agencies. Registers of ethnic identity, including Russian or Swiss Mennonite ethnicities, are also important aspects of Mennonite identity which come to bear on musical practice. Gender identity has played a role in musical style and content among Mennonites as well, particularly in the use of gender-inclusive texts in recent Mennonite hymnals.

Mennonites, like many North American religious groups, can be seen as forming a complex network of relationships between the group and broader North American society, and between subgroups which make up the group. For both Mennonites and other North American religious groups, music embodies, affects and reflects this network, and is a site of conflict where the network shifts and changes through simple acts, such as choosing which songs to sing.

# Chapter 3

# Theorizing Identity, Mennonites, and Music

## 3.1 Introduction

The three themes of this dissertation are the ethnographic presentation of musical practice as part of the social fabric of a religious community, the relationship of musical practice to individual identity, and the relationship of genre to group identity. Key premises which shape my treatment of these themes, then, are the nature of ethnic and religious groups in general, the placement of the Mennonites in these categories, and the relationship of music to individual and group identity.

The two primary literatures concerned with theorizing identity and music for my study are ethnomusicological identity studies and Mennonite studies, including studies of Mennonite music. A survey of these theorizations of identity and music's relationship to it is essential, in order to make clear the theoretical framework of my thesis, and to identify the theoretical discourses in which it takes part. In other words, the purpose of this chapter is to identify concepts and premises structuring my ethnographic observations and analyses of fieldwork data, and to introduce theoretical discourses to which I will respond in the conclusion of the dissertation.

I will examine how various registers of identity are theorized as central in the ethnomusicological and Mennonite studies literature, and the ways in which music is understood as contributing to the construction of identity, or if music is not explicitly theorized as such, what possibilities for its contribution would be allowed within a particular model of identity. I will place my theoretical stance for this study relative to the perspectives surveyed: in particular, arguing that various registers of identity can be theorized as multiple points of identification for an individual or group; that the practice of music in worship is key to the construction of group identity for Mennonites, both symbolically and in terms of creating particular social structures in a church; and that musical genre is key to the construction of identity *between* Mennonite churches.

Ethnomusicological identity studies have focussed on diverse registers of identity, including ethnicity, diaspora, language, nation, place, race, religion, subculture, class, age and gender. Mennonite studies, in contrast, have focussed on the central registers of identity for Mennonites as either ethnicity or religion, allowing for a certain amount of "difference within."

## 3.2 Foundational Concepts of Ethnic Identity and Identity Construction

Since ideas of ethnic identity are foundational to the concepts of individual and group identity found in both ethnomusicology and Mennonite studies, I will briefly discuss some important sociological and anthropological definitions of ethnicity, and concomitant notions of music's role in identity formation. Rather than being a comprehensive or chronological survey, this thematic discussion will emphasize major concepts of ethnicity which figure in to Mennonite studies and which have implications concerning ethnic musical practice.

A commonly accepted definition of ethnicity is given in the *American Heritage Dictionary*: "a social group within a cultural and social system that claims or is accorded special status on the basis of complex, often variable traits, including religious, linguistic, ancestral or physical characteristics" (American Heritage Dictionary, 1980a). Clifford Geertz (1963) employed a similar perspective when he examined ethnicity as culturally powerful *primordial attachments* within a group, such as tribalism, seen as an obstacle to modern statehood in Asia and Africa . The ethnic group is characterized as a group with a powerful understanding of a common past or other essence or "identity," and common social, religious, expressive-cultural, and linguistic practices. This definition of an ethnic group implies that cultural practices are employed to maintain an ethnic centre: that is, practices such as music could be directed at in-group members.

Definitions such as the above are critiqued by Paul Brass (1991, 18) as an untenable objective definition of ethnicity, which "assumes that though no specific attribute is invariably associated with all ethnic categories, there must be some distinguishing cultural feature that clearly separates one group of people from another." Such a definition of ethnicity is not seen as tenable because it assumes a relatively stable reliance on a particular cultural feature, and does not account for the persistence over time of this feature or alternately for the persistence of ethnicity in the event that this feature changes.

Max Weber's foundational definition of the ethnic group similarly identifies consistent traits in a group, but states that an actual kinship between the group's members is not necessary:

> We shall call "ethnic groups" those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or custom or both, or because of memories of colonization and migration; this belief must be important for the propagation of group formation; conversely it does not matter whether or not an objective blood relationship exists. (Weber, 1978, 389)

Weber's definition is more complex than the definitions cited above in that it makes it clear that the common descent of the group is *imagined* and that this belief is necessary to the construction of the group as such. This foundational definition then states that an ideological ethnic centre of common descent is the key identifying feature of an ethnic group.

The ethnic group can function to restrict access to money and power to insiders; in this theorization boundaries must be strong in order to preserve the function of the group. Abner Cohen (1969) argued that pragmatism of this nature was the primary reason for the persistence of ethnicity; Cohen's research concerning a Hausa group in Yoruba surroundings suggested that Hausa ethnicity functioned to allow the group to control trade and thus to have privileged access to money and power.

Ethnic studies concerning North American immigrant groups, on the other hand, began from the assumption that the boundaries of such a group hinder its access to mainstream resources; these boundaries become eroded through processes of acculturation and assimilation into mainstream society, most likely through conformity to the existing dominant cultural and social norms (Gordon, 1964). This perspective, which George Marcus (1998) has termed "resistance and accommodation studies," has been the most influential perspective concerning ethnicity and group identity for Mennonite studies.

Fredrik Barth (1969, 16-19) influentially argued that a definition of ethnicity should emphasize the boundaries of the group rather than its centre or essence. Ethnic groups, contends Barth, exist primarily by virtue of maintaining their boundaries by means of various social and cultural practices; to put it another way, the ethnic group is an ongoing product of human interaction rather than vice versa. Herbert Gans (1979) suggests that boundary maintenance practices are best understood as symbolic. Similarly, Paul Brass (1991, 18) argues that "ethnicity is a sense of ethnic identity" produced by cultural practices delineating the group from others.

Symbolic ethnicity, as defined by Gans, is a set of practices, which are largely expressive-cultural, which refer to the "old country" in a way which is both visible and comprehensible to third generation immigrants. Gans argues that it is *primarily* symbolic practices, including expressive culture, which maintain ethnicity and they do so through creating and maintaining a fictive memory of origin. Such practices are both insider and outsider-focussed, representing the group as having a particular origin to insiders and to others, and in so doing drawing a boundary between insiders and outsiders. Given this symbolic characterization of ethnicity, cultural practices, including music, must work to define boundaries between the group and others.

Ethnicity cannot be used as an exclusive frame for the study of identity. Arjun Appadurai argues that, when considered in light of the increasing speed of movement of persons and culture in the global social and cultural economy, ethnicity constitutes a "politics of primordialism." In this politics, cultural characteristics and in-group connections are assumed to have always been (Appadurai, 1996, 1990). Others have argued that ethnicity thus conceals difference and the ongoing construction of identity within groups under a rubric of primordialism (Balibar, 1991, 78). Referring to black identity, Paul Gilroy (1993) calls such modes of pastness "roots," while the paths which black people have in fact travelled he calls "routes"; for Gilroy, it is not the roots which matter so much in contemporary configurations of identity, since it is problematic to fix any single originary point for such a travelled identity, as it is the "routes" social groups have taken and continue to take and the identities which become salient in the course of such journeys.

These critiques are better directed at the common definitions of ethnicity, such as the *American Heritage Dictionary* definition cited above, than at foundational sociological definitions of ethnicity, since foundational definitions make it explicit that ethnicity is constructed in the present. However, these critiques are nonetheless pertinent to foundational definitions of ethnicity in that they locate as problematic the idea of a single originary point or a "pastness" in understanding identity. I would argue that registers of identity such as gender, age, subculture, class, religion and language are not necessarily modes of "pastness." These registers may explicitly appeal to the present, as in "women are now accepted in all careers, and my present experience is definitive of this," or future, "your ongoing development as a new convert to religion X," as the moment which makes identity meaningful.

There is a commonality among the modes of construction for ethnic identity which may be inferred given the above definitions: *ethnic* identity construction takes place through cultural practices which invoke or construct a collective memory of a shared past.

## 3.3 Ethnomusicological Models of Identity

It is in the sense of musical practices as a kind of identificatory boundary maintenance that "ethnicity" has often been understood in the ethnomusicological literature. Martin Stokes (1994a, 3) argues that, because of the affective associations which can exist between music and particular originary places, music is able to "[evoke] and [organize] collective memories and present experiences of place with an intensity, power and simplicity unmatched by any other social activity." By "authentically" representing a place which is seen as proper to a group, music "focuses a way of talking about music, a way of saying to outsiders and insiders alike 'this is what is really significant about this music', 'this is the music that makes us different from other people' " (Stokes, 1994a, 7).

The idea of a place-based diasporic identity, or its close relative, immigrant identity, characterizes much ethnomusicological writing on ethnic identity and other place-based identities. Such studies often take their cue from Benedict Anderson's idea of "imagined communities," a term coined to describe nationalism, but which is used in terms of diaspora to describe the connections and experience of "community" which diasporic groups feel with the groups still residing at the originary point of diaspora (Anderson, 1991). Musical practices in the diaspora may be shared with a home culture (Gallaugher, 1994;

Sugarman, 1997); however, they may also represent a home culture through relatively idiosyncratic musical traditions (Manuel, 1997-1998, 2000; Schramm, 1986).

Benedict Anderson (1991, 46) has argued that a shared language coupled with mediated expressive culture can create a reading community, a predecessor form of national consciousness in his framework.[1] Etienne Balibar (1991, 99-102) argues that language itself is generally too open an identifier to be an effective identity boundary for precisely this reason: anyone who can learn to read or speak the language is then part of the community. Balibar argues, then, that language-based identities usually have an edge which leans to a racial or ethnic consciousness. To this end, languages are re-constructed in local "insider" versions which are a more effective sort of identifier. Ethnomusicological writings have analyzed the use of such "insider" languages, particularly as used in song texts in local or non-dominant language traditions, as a sign of post-colonial national (Lipsitz 1994, 153; Averill 1992, 165-167; Sweeney-Turner 1998) or diasporic (place-based) ethnic identity. Ethnomusicologists have also seen rural locality within the (urbanizing) nation-state as key to identity, often exemplified by the prominent use of rural place names in songs (Solomon, 2000).

Discourses of racial identity have been theorized in ways which emphasize both essence and positionality. For popular music scholar Nelson George (1988), black music builds on and emanates from a racial centre, while George Lipsitz (1994, 27) argues that black musical practices represent and confer value on an overlapping race and class group to others. Practices of boundary maintenance in Lipsitz' formulation function also to gain cultural and economic capital for the group by creating an identity which becomes known to others, and which is thus valuable as a symbol.

Religious identity has been theorized as distinct from other forms of identity and in other cases as continuous with other forms of identity. For example, ethnomusicological studies exist of religious groups emerging from ethnic groups as a new social form with more permeable boundaries, with concomitant changes in expressive culture, in response to a structural or economic change (Muller, 1999). Others studies conclude that it is primarily expressive-culture which changes when a group becomes "religious" in response to a structural change, so that the group remains ethnic but adds a religious dimension to its identity (Comaroff, 1985). What is interesting here is that musical practices are seen as contributing to identity by representing to both insiders and outsiders *multiple places and times* as key to group identity, rather than a single place-referent. Musical practice thus contributes to changing the identity of the group to allow for the recasting of old structures of identity within new social structures, or for the flexible negotiation of multiple identities within a new group.

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[1] In Anderson's work this consciousness arises historically with the media form of the newspaper.

A religious group may also be theorized as continuous with a subculture, in the sense of a cultural group existing in political resistance to a mainstream (Lausevic, 1996). Dick Hebdige (1979) characterized the subculture as recasting *style*, which was once assumed to be signification of a meaning, as *signifying practice*. In the signifying practice of a subculture, the stylistic codes of mainstream society and the meanings which these codes are assumed to have are continually subverted and resisted. Beverly Bush Patterson's study of Appalachian Primitive Baptists suggests that this group is a religious subculture, because insiders analyze their own music's worth based on its *differences* from mainstream North American musical practices (Patterson, 1995, 31).

The dynamics of age and youth, intergenerational boundaries, represent another important register of identity in the literature. Ethnomusicologists have emphasized the multiple readings of music which are possible between generations, so that musical practices of generations may differ, the music valued by younger musicians being seen as a threat by older musicians (Rice, 1996). On the other hand, the same music may be practiced by younger and older generations, but understood differently. For example Thomas Turino

(1993, 162-166) argues that for youth, traditional Conima music performs the role of a pro-indigenous folklore, while the older audience of this music, mostly ex-residents of Conima, find it a nostalgic recreation of the activities which informed their own social life in Conima.

Finally, gender represents another important register of identity in the ethnomusicological literature. Music is seen as an avenue through which gender identity is performed and gender conflicts and contests are resolved (Kisliuk, 1998, 141-145).

While studies concerned with many registers of identity exist in the ethnomusicological literature, currently few studies focussed primarily on music and class per se exist in this literature, a recent collection on music and Marxist thought being a notable exception (Qureshi, 2002). However, ethnomusicological studies have focussed on class in terms of its intersection with other registers of identity, such as race or occupation; for example, Veit Erlmann's discussion of class focusses on it as it overlaps with race in black musical practices in the South African city of Durban (Erlmann, 1991). Studies focussed primarily on class are represented in the popular music literature, such as Gael Sweeney's article concerning working-class culture and Elvis (Sweeney, 1997).

To summarize, many of these characterizations of identity focus on the registers of place – diaspora, post-colonial nationalism, and rural versus urban. Social groups are understood as communities in which insider individuals see the community as their primary identifier; in other words, the insider individuals of a community see themselves primarily as such, and only in the second place see themselves as identified with other groups such as a gender group.

Ethnomusicological studies of these place-based registers of identity have seen music as contributing to these forms of identity by representing the group within the media or the public arena of performance, particularly through sounds, language or place names which are understood as representing a place of origin for the group. Registers of identity whose referent is not place-based are primarily still seen as being constructed in musical representation of some kind of origin or essence – femininity in gender, for example. The concept of constructing identity through representation is similar to Barth's concept of boundary maintenance and Gans's idea of ethnicity in (representative) symbolic practice. Nonetheless, in these studies music is seen as having an essential and constructive role in delineating the social identity of a group, if primarily through representation.

## 3.4 Mennonite Studies and Mennonite Identity

### 3.4.1 Sociological and Historical Accounts of Mennonite Identity

Sociological accounts of Mennonite identity have tended to identify Mennonites as a group defined by an ethnic social centre, which builds networks outwards, or alternately as a group defined by networks which disseminate and make concrete a shared religious faith. For example, Leo Driedger (1988, 110-112) argues that the Russian Mennonites, who were urban in origin, urbanized after emigrating to North America much more quickly than the Swiss Mennonites, who were rural in origin. Driedger's argument makes it clear that he views the originary points of these two groups of Mennonites as influencing their forms of social structure over a span of four centuries.

Calvin Redekop (1998), on the other hand, has argued that the institutional and social networks which make up Mennonite life express a common Mennonite religious faith and system of beliefs, and when these networks are eroded, the Mennonite centre then crumbles.[2]

This does not mean, however, that Driedger and Redekop consider Mennonites to be only religious or ethnic, but rather that both of these kinds of identity are possible ways to characterize Mennonites. One significant argument which Leo Driedger and Calvin Redekop hold in common is that the contrast between rural and urban Mennonite communities can be characterized as a contrast between a more closed, ethnic community and a more open, religious community (Driedger 1986, 375; Redekop 1989, 135-136).

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[2] Peter Hamm (1987, 130) similarly argues that the Canadian Mennonite Brethren, from a historical and sociological vantage point, are best understood as a sectarian religious group whose identity hinges on processes of secularization, that is, processes which increase connections to the wider society, being linked to sacralization, that is, processes that mark off or preserve sectarian identity.

Historical work concerning Mennonites can be characterized as conforming to several different types: a history which argues for a unitary religious origin, a descriptive history which argues for multiple origins connected to multiple religious visions, and social-historical work which emphasizes ethnicity. The first type takes its cue from the historical and theological work of Harold S. Bender (1944), who argued for a normative beginning to Mennonite history, with the Swiss story of Conrad Grebel and the theological ideals of peace, community and discipleship which Grebel represented.

However, Werner O. Packul suggests that, as a discipline, Mennonite Anabaptist social history has moved from the prescriptive "Anabaptist-vision" mode associated with Bender's work, to a descriptive mode, examining who the Anabaptists were as a variety of historical narratives rather than as a unitary example to be followed (Packul, 1990; Stayer, 1988).[3] This descriptive mode of social history often includes a notion of difference within the Mennonite community: for example, of different histories and important overlaps between Swiss and Russian Mennonites (Juhnke, 1988; Sawatsky, 1988).

Sociological understandings of Mennonites, particularly the idea of ethnicity, inform Mennonite historical work. Ted Regehr's volume concerning the history of Mennonites in Canada, 1939-1970, can be considered in this light (Regehr, 1996). The book describes the Mennonites as a religious group, whose belief system is a key identifying feature. On the other hand, a central theme of the volume is the constantly changing nature of the relationship of Mennonites to Canadian society, from separation to accommodation but not assimilation, a paradigm derived from ethnic studies (Mccormack, 1997).

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[3] In a fascinating essay, James Stayer (1988) relates the story of "The Easy Demise of a Normative Vision of Anabaptism," which recounts the details of his 1972 publication of ***Anabaptists and the Sword***, which argued for a polygenic view of Anabaptist roots, undermining the normative pacifist view of Bender by including the violent and revolutionary Münsterites among other Anabaptist groups. Surprisingly, general acceptance among Mennonite historians quickly followed.

James Urry's sociologically-oriented social-historical work grounds Mennonite origins and history in class relations, which produced boundary-maintaining group practices (Urry, 1988, 2001). These boundary-maintaining practices were not necessarily theological or religious. For example, Urry's study of the origins of the Mennonite Brethren argues that, though insiders to the group would feel that the reasons for their origins were theological, the relatively privileged socioeconomic position of the people who became the Mennonite Brethren was an equally important reason for their formation of a new religious group.

The role of music in identity construction is very rarely discussed in sociological and historical studies of Mennonites, and its role is never explicitly theorized in this literature to my knowledge. However, this literature is theoretically important for the present study in that it sets up the understandings of Mennonite as an ethnic or religious group, influencing musical studies of Mennonites and providing a basic understanding of Mennonites as a group to which this study will respond.

### 3.4.2 Studies of Mennonites and Music

Studies of Mennonites and music may be placed relative to a sociological concept of the Mennonites as an ethnic group, or alternately as a religious group. Donald Kraybill's study of Mennonite high-school songs in the 1960s examines changes in the texts representing changes in the value systems of Mennonite songwriters (Kraybill, 1977). Music is seen as a mode of representing the values and identity of a group. Mennonites here are seen as a religious group, which changes through contact with other religious groups and their theologies, such as evangelical theology.

More recent studies of Mennonites and music connect concepts of music as a social phenomenon and music as a representative text. Wesley Berg and Carol Dyck's sociological study of church musicians in the early 1990s found an estrangement between Canadian Mennonite church musicians and their home churches (Berg & Dyck, 1994). These musicians valued high aesthetic standards and well-thought-out theological content in their music, while they felt that their home congregations were more interested in familiar or easy-to-sing music. Mennonites are understood as a religious group which has internal conflict concerning the content of the worship service. Music plays a central role in this conflict because it represents theological beliefs and aesthetic preferences for insiders on either side of the conflict.

In another contemporary study, Doreen Klassen (1995) has argued that the Mennonite Brethren have shifted from a focus on the theology expressed by hymn texts to a focus on the emotional and spiritual experience of music in church. Klassen's perspective is that these changes in musical practice, and in particular in theological content represented in church music, occurred in large part due to the closer and closer interconnections of Canadian Mennonite Brethren and the wider Canadian evangelical community.

Klassen's *Singing Mennonite*, on the other hand, constitutes a reading of an ethnic Mennonite folk music tradition—Low German songs among the Russian Mennonite of Southern Manitoba—which corresponds in many ways to Urry's class-oriented social historicism (Klassen, 1988). Klassen's argument is based on a reading of linguistic difference as aligned with class differences: Low German, a language of everyday usage by many Southern Manitoba Mennonites, was seen as signifying low social and economic class, while High German signified a higher social and economic class. Thus, the Low German folk songs of the Southern Manitoba Mennonites articulate not only a site of resistance for Mennonites versus anglo-conformity with mainstream Manitoba society, but also a difference of class within the Mennonites via the use of an "insider" language. Again, music contributes to the identity of the group through representing origins, although in this instance they are origins of overlapping language and class rather than only linguistic origins.[4]

Let me sum up the implications of this survey of Mennonite writings, as follows: the multiple registers of identity which I mentioned at the outset figure in to understandings of Mennonite identity in this literature. Mennonites are seen as either an ethnic or a religious group, but within that frame, differences are seen as occurring along lines of age, language, and economic class. This frame characterizes both social and historical accounts and musical accounts of Mennonite identity, as I have noted. Not only, then, are various domains of identity taken into account in current writings on Mennonites; the frame of a group-based account which allows for "difference within" is represented here.[5] The way in which music contributes to identity is not strongly theorized in this literature; for the most part, its contribution is understood as representing to insiders or outsiders a religious or ethnic identity by theological content or language.

## 3.5 Multiple Identifiers in the Ethnomusicological Literature

This extended discussion of the range of domains of identity which are employed in ethnomusicological and Mennonite writings begs the question: what models of group identity might there be to account for complex identities, in which individuals who are part of a group might claim a multiplicity of identifiers? The most promising models of identity in the ethnomusicological literature for this task are the following: group-based models which accommodate difference within a group, a focus on the individual or the performance occasion as a frame with which to traverse multiple domains of identity, and a focus on the imagination as a flexible and global identity domain.

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[4] Hildi Froese Tiessen (1998) makes a similar argument concerning the use of Low German in Russian Mennonite fiction and poetry writing.

[5] However, it is not generally theorized as such, T.D. Regehr's *Mennonites in Canada* volume (Regehr, 1996) representing a notable exception.

Gregory Barz's concept of "disaffection" is one way in which a group study can accommodate difference within a group. Disaffection describes a selective engagement between a smaller group and a larger group (Barz, 1997, 237-238). This concept can thus describe a range of identifications in the smaller group, ranging from almost complete rejection of the larger group's practices, including musical practices, to adopting a syncretic set of the practices of the two groups. This model allows for subjects multiply identified across different groups and for overlap which resulted between groups. This model allows for both analysis of music as a representative text and as a social practice.

Ruth Glasser (1995) argues succinctly for a model which works partially at a group level, and accommodates multiple layers of identification. Glasser argues that ethnic identity is one of many identities which people hold and use socially in different social contexts. Her perspective draws on the differences between insider and outsider understandings of musical practices as representative texts; music still contributes to identity as a representative text, but the multiple understandings of this text in social circulation allow ethnic insiders to use these representations to construct a multiplicity of identities.

The sociological concept of "adhesive identities," advanced by Kwang Chung Kim and Won Moo Hurh is a similar concept of identity in which a particular feature is central, but change and multiplicity occurs (Kim & Hurh, 1984; Yang, 1999). Ethnic and religious identities constitute a core which is stable throughout the life of an individual; however, other registers of identity are added "adhesively" to this core as the individual moves in different social spheres in which such registers might be shared with others, or usefully deployed.

The individual as a starting point is a key strategy by which to accommodate multiple layers of identity in a group (Cohen, 1998; Turino, 1993; Rice, 1996). Timothy Rice works logically from a focus on the individual to a sense of group identity. Rice (1996, 300) begins by arguing that individuals "[act] musically" in ways which generate social identity for themselves. However, the musical choices of individuals take place in a cultural context in which meanings are assigned to their choices. This both allows the individual to act meaningfully to identify themselves and restricts the range of their musical choices. Musical practices both represent identity and structure social life in this model.

The performance occasion itself can be another starting point by which the identity of multiple individuals can be understood to figure in to musical practice. Regula Qureshi's study of Qawwali connects context – including the individual audience members and performers – and the sonic message of the music itself via referents of the spiritual identity and status of audience members and the changing spiritual state of those present at the performance occasion (Qureshi, 1986, 209-222). For Qureshi (1986, 208), it is these referents which "[unlock the] meaning, non-musical meaning" of the music in terms of its spiritual and social import. The identity, status and state of the audience members has a direct and ongoing impact on the musical choices of the performer, who chooses musical practices from a grammar related to these referents; the musical practice in turn impacts the spiritual state of the audience members. Thus the identities of members are directly related to the sound content of the music, which is not a constant but a negotiated process. Qureshi's approach rigorously treats music as a system of representation, grounded in the changing social context of the performance occasion.

A final way of accommodating multiple registers of identification is to focus on a globalized imagination as a key to the identities experienced in globalized mediated music. For Jocelyne Guilbault (1997), focussing on individuals and the mediations which effect pathways between localities and individuals, provides an understanding of the ways in which world music travels. Guilbault understands mediations as social and economic connections between peoples, in particular the movement of cultural commodities. Rather than focussing on music as representative of identity, music is seen as part of global cultural flows which intersect with flows of persons and ideas, allowing for unexpected and subversive uses of music in identity politics.

In sum, several models exist which can usefully accommodate multiple registers of identity in the ethnomusicological literature: group-based models accommodating difference within a group, models which focus on the individual, and models which take the global imagination into account. With this in mind, I will turn to the ways in which multiple registers of identity have been theorized in Mennonite studies.

### 3.5.1 Mennonite Multiplicity: Literary and Theological Studies

Important writings on Mennonite identity, besides social, historical and musical studies, include theological and literary writings. Theological writings in particular have presented important theorizations of gender difference within the Mennonite frame (Epp-Stobbe, 1996). Furthermore, theologians have had to come to terms with Mennonite multiplicity in ways which sociologists have not, since they in theory are addressing the theological situation of the global Mennonite church (Dyck, 1990, 16).

I would like to focus, however, on Mennonite literary theory, and then on a significant recent work in theology and music. These two bodies of work represent two theoretical strengths which parallel two possibilities existing in the ethnomusicological literature for the representation and theorization of multiple levels of identity, that is, a focus on the individual and on the global imagination.

Rodney Sawatsky (1991) makes the point that Mennonite creative writing has been characterized by the figure of the insider/outsider, with poet Patrick Friesen often cited as an example of such a person. These persons define themselves as no longer part of the Mennonite church, having found difference—of class, political orientation, gender, et cetera—between themselves and the mainstream of the Mennonite church. However, they were, as Hildi Froese Tiessen puts it, "nurtured within a Mennonite community. . . [and] had access to the inside of the Gemeinschaft" and thus have an insider quality as well (Tiessen quoted in Sawatsky 1991, 115). Their individual creative writings on Mennonites, then, constitute a nontraditional but significant individual account of multiple layers of identification. For example, Patrick Friesen's *the Shunning* is the story of a Southern Manitoba Mennonite who questions the beliefs of the group and is ostracized, but remains so connected to the group that he is unable to leave and in the end commits suicide (Friesen, 1980).[6]

This focus on the individual as the primary locus of investigation and frame for multiple layers of identification is rarely found in Mennonite sociological and historical writings and most musical counterparts to these writings – though for example Leo Driedger (1999) incorporates this perspective in his newer work. Such a frame is more prominently represented in the ethnomusicological literature; it is also represented in popular-music writings, most strikingly by the volume *My Music* (Crafts *et al.*, 1993), which consists of more or less free-form interviews with individuals of all ages and a broad variety of musical and occupational backgrounds presented verbatim.

*Singing: A Mennonite Voice* represents the first Mennonite-studies analogue to the *My Music* project: it presents in a thematic, theologically focussed narrative the results of a research project in which Mennonites were asked, "What happens when you sing?" (Kropf & Nafziger, 2001, 13). Kropf and Nafziger begin with the content of the interviews, presenting interview material focussed on personal histories and repertoires of music, and experiences of making music in the Mennonite church. They argue that hymns represent a shared traditional repertoire and sound not only uniting Mennonites in North America but also acting as a repository of memory for personal histories—such as hymns sung at a close friend's funeral—and a geography, that is, the sound of "my home church" as a sacred place.

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[6] Friesen's work turns on individual experience of differences of religious belief, as does Rudy Wiebe's *Peace Shall Destroy Many* (Wiebe, 1962). Other writings have articulated differences rooted in gender, although these often connect with differences of religious belief; for example, see Di Brandt's *Mother Not Mother* (Brandt, 1992) and Julia Kasdorf's *Sleeping Preacher* (Kasdorf, 1992).

Mark Metzler Swain (2001) posits that, given urbanization and the concomitant decline of ethnic enclaves and their characteristic patterns of dress, language and economy, Mennonite community is now experienced in largely symbolic and potentially global or multi-local ways. "Traditional" recipes, Mennonite magazines, and Mennonite literature and poetry are examples of such symbolic identity. Community is marked off in new ways which may transcend geographic boundaries: "Such communities may be a small urban church, the readers of a magazine or book of poetry, or the subscribers to one of the many Mennonite list-serves that currently thrive on the World Wide Web. Though these communities are radically different from the Mennonite communities of the past, they are still very much Mennonite" (Swain, 2001, 98).

To Swain's non-local markers of community, I would also add music representing a global Mennonite community. *Hymnal: A Worship Book*, for example, quite self-consciously features music from global sources in an attempt to actualize a sense of global Mennonite community in worship. Though print is certainly an older form of mediated cultural exchange than is the internet, the medium of the hymnal is nonetheless seen by many Mennonites as a means by which cultural practices of Mennonites elsewhere can be represented here through singing global hymns. In this process, a multi-ethnic and global Mennonite church is imagined.

## 3.6 Ethnography and the Construction of Identity

Ethnomusicological theory and Mennonite studies have set up basic categories fundamental to my ethnographic and analytic methods in this thesis. These categories include an understanding of the ethnic group and a variety of other forms of groups, including religious groups; a placement of Mennonites as both ethnic and religious group; and the concept of music as contributing to identity through representation. I will now respond critically to these concepts, in order to set up my particular theoretical understanding of individual and group identity and music, which structure both the ethnographic and analytic work in this dissertation.

My first critique of the majority of ethnomusicological identity studies and Mennonite studies has been that, despite their many admirable qualities, they often rely on a reified and monolithic conception of identity, and in particular of ethnic and religious identity. I prefer a concept of identity as rooted in the individual, and for multiple registers of identity, because such a concept of identity is necessary in order to examine the contribution of music both to the identity of an individual and to understand the role of the individual and their musical practices in shaping group identity.

Rather than coming up with an entirely new theory of identity, I adopt pieces of existing theory towards an understanding of identity which contributes to ethnographic work focussed on music and identity: first situating identity in the individual and their practices, then subgroups and then the group. Different registers of identity may come into play at each of these levels; by moving from the individual to the group level, social structures such as musical subgroups of a larger group can be seen as one aspect of individual identity and, conversely, the contribution of that identity to the identity of a larger group.

While most Mennonite studies have been historical or sociological (and quantitative), I have chosen an ethnographic approach to Mennonite music. In so doing I include the individuals within the congregation as important performers of this music. I have attempted to describe the individual's voice, including their occasional disaffection, within the church group (Barz, 1997). That is, in interviews and in fieldnotes, I have attempted to discover selective engagements with the expressive culture and concomitant notions of identity that characterize a church, both on the parts of individuals and of subgroups within a particular congregation. This ethnographic approach is the norm for ethnomusicology, and may help to account for ethnomusicology's broader and more nuanced understandings of identity relative to understandings found in the Mennonite studies literature.

I focus on the individual as a way in to the group (Cohen, 1998; Rice, 1996; Kropf & Nafziger, 2001). Rather than relating the stories of individuals in detail, my models of fieldwork and analysis incorporate the individual as a starting point for describing group processes and identity. As I outlined in chapter one, I began by observing what roles were key to musical processes at a church; however, my data concerning these roles as practice was largely gathered from interviews with individuals. I compared their viewpoints on a role and will present both common understandings and significant differences between multiple individual accounts of each role in the ethnographic chapters. Similarly, my observations concerning the value of genres at each church were also primarily derived from interviews with individuals, compared and overlaid or contrasted to form these sections of each ethnographic chapter, Finally, I understand the group itself as primarily defined by the interactions of member individuals and arrive at accounts of group identity at the close of each chapter at least in part on the basis of the individual accounts which I heard in interview sessions. Of course, it remains clear that I am the mediator in this process of changing multiple individual interviews to a text which discusses group identity.

As ethnomusicologists have argued that a global frame is appropriate for the study of music, anthropologist George Marcus has similarly argued for ethnography which is multi-sited (Guilbault, 1997, 1993; Lipsitz, 1994; Marcus, 1998). Marcus argues for a comparative anthropological consideration of different places, which are not closely or obviously connected, as a way to trace social stories which do not coincide with single cultural communities. I have tried to adopt a multi-local approach to fieldwork by rooting my study in three different churches. Unlike Marcus's multiple sites, however, these churches are closely related and interact frequently. Nonetheless, the comparisons and connections between these churches—and the much wider networks in which they are implicated—allow me to problematize relatively singular understandings of Mennonite identity.

My focus on music's relationship to identity in the life of the individual is based on the above-cited premise of the individual contributing to group identity, resulting in methods of multi-local ethnographic fieldwork and the ethnographic interview. Focussing on the individual as I have done in my fieldwork has allowed access to data which would be difficult or impossible to access with more quantitative methods of analysis, which have sometimes characterized Mennonite sociological work.

## 3.7 Theorizing Music's Contribution to Mennonite Identity Construction

My second critique of ethnomusicological identity studies and Mennonite studies has been that they tend to understand music's contribution to the identity of the group as *representing* the group's identity to insiders or outsiders.

### 3.7.1 Music as Practice and Interior Social Structure

For example, Doreen Klassen's *Singing Mennonite* focusses strongly on the role of Low German texts as representative of a Mennonite identity (Klassen, 1988). Most ethnomusicological work focusses strongly on the social context in which music is made. However, when it is time to "tie in" the relationship of music to identity, ethnomusicological work often relies primarily on reading musical performance or musical sounds, texts and instruments as representational of a particular group. For example, Michelle Kisliuk's study of BaAka music suggests that music contributes to BaAka constructions of an egalitarian femininity through the grace and power which represent the feminine in music and dance (Kisliuk, 1998, 140).

I am not arguing that these representations are not real or pertinent to the identity of these groups; both Klassen's and Kisliuk's work address such representation in a sophisticated frame focussed on the place of music within a broad variety of social variables and convince the reader of the pertinence of these representations. Furthermore, Kisliuk in particular emphasizes changes in the process of performance as a response to changes in the surrounding society of the BaAka; her approach allows for change over time rather than reliance on representation of an unchanging identity. Representation within songs, song texts, and performance occasions is indeed a possible avenue by which music contributes to identity.

However, I would argue that such accounts present problems for theorizing music's contribution to multiple registers of identities within a group since they connect identity with representation, typically of a singular symbolic relationship such as a dance style with an egalitarian femininity. If the BaAka were also to practice pieces which symbolically contradicted this relationship, such as pieces connecting femininity with submissiveness or cruelty, this theoretical model would not easily account for the contribution of such songs to BaAka identity. In other words, the model is inflexible in that it relies on symbolism or representation which must be relatively uniform for the singing repertoire of a group, even if it allows for changes in this repertoire over time.

Other possibilities, namely the examination of music as a social practice which structures social life, and genre as a key to the extension of these practices and structures beyond local communities, exist in the ethnomusicological and Mennonite studies literatures. These possibilities allow for a reading of music *as practice*, moving the focus away from the significance of specific songs or dances and to broader understandings of music teaching, performance, and reception – that is, musical practice and its concomitant social structures – and to the identity which an entire *genre* can be understood as representing, even if individual pieces or songs within the genre contradict this representation.

Jane Sugarman draws on Bordieu's notion of the habitus to argue that, rather than reflecting social reality, expressive and habitual practices can instill this reality in the body. Not only is gender central to identity, and represented in music, music becomes a way in which gender is itself constructed and by which it becomes embodied in individuals (Sugarman, 1997, 1989). Gregory Barz's study of kwaya in Tanzania offers another possible permutation of a group defined socially by musical practice: a religious group which provides for identity through the communal social functions of its musical practices (Barz, 1997).[7]

These accounts do not rely primarily on the idea of music's representation of group identity. Instead, they argue that musical practice engenders social structures in a particular community which influence the way identity is understood in that community.

Similarly, Arnold Schellenberg's sociological work concerning Mennonite musicians in Winnipeg argues that Mennonite musicians in Winnipeg in the 1960s both increased connections with the broader musical world of Winnipeg, through activities such as public performances and lessons, and maintained strong in-group connections through sharing such activities with other in-group members (Schellenberg, 1968). This sociological argument sees music as contributing to identity through the social connections it engenders, rather than the representations which music produces as a signifying practice.

Kropf and Nafziger suggest that through the experiential and bodily dimension of congregational singing, Mennonite Christian community is created and embodied and corporate and individual prayer occur (Kropf & Nafziger, 2001). In other words, they locate the formation of religious identity for a Mennonite church in the collective performance of singing together *during the*

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[7] Kwaya refers to Tanzanian Christian choral music. Katie Warke (1999, 138-139), discussing another Tanzanian kwaya, similarly emphasizes the community life which characterizes the kwaya, and the embodiment of this community in music. In a manner similar to that of Comaroff, Warke further suggests that this music, in its function of charismatic worship, empowers by providing a sense of a direct experience of the divine through its musical mediation of the elements of rural and urban, traditional and popular, and Western and African.

*worship service.*

This understanding of the worship service itself as the definitive context in forming the identity of a religious group has important precedents in the sociology of religion. Emile Durkheim (1963 (1915), 226) argued that religious rituals symbolically divide the spheres of sacred and secular, thus defining the sacred space of the religious community. Similarly Hans Mol (1976, 233-45) argued that religious ritual performs a system of religious meaning which creates and reinforces religious identity.

These perspectives from both ethnomusicology and Mennonite studies coincide with the musicological concept of *musicking* as a social activity defining a particular social world, advanced by Christopher Small (2001). Drawing on Clifford Geertz, Small (2001, 346) argues as follows: "any musical performance...can be thought of as a ritual, and a ritual is a pattern of actions in which shared values – that is, shared concepts of right relationships – are affirmed, explored and celebrated. The ritual order enacts a vision of a social order." That is, in musical performance, we both create a particular social structure and become part of that structure through our experience of the performance.

My focus on music as creating social structures in a church is based on the premises outlined above; in my analyses, I draw on this perspective by carefully describing the social structures of the church which are related to musical performance. In this way, I attempt to show that church music contributes to the identity of the church as understood by insiders, shaping the social structures of a particular church by being a collectively shared performance practice, particularly during the worship service.

### 3.7.2 The Genre Concept, External Relationships and Identity

Identity extends outward from the church as well as being a product of interior social structures. I have suggested that ethnomusicology has often studied music and identity from the perspective of representation through particular performances or even forms of music. A similar but broader concept used in popular music studies provides a way to understand the extension of music's contribution to identity to external networks in which the church and church members are involved: that of genre as a field of social activity.

Ethnomusicology and musicology have also discussed genre. Musicologists have sometimes seen genre simply as typology, or classifying music by formal characteristics; the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* in fact defines genre as "a class, type or category, sanctioned by convention" (Samson, 2001, 657).[8] Recently, more complicated theorizations of genre have been posited in musicological work, such as Jeffrey Kallberg's characterization of genre as a "generic contract" between the listener's expectations and formal conventions available to the composer (Kallberg, 1987-8, 243). Genre, then, takes into account not only "shared characteristics" in the music itself, but also "responses" of audiences (Kallberg, 1987-8, 246). This allows Kallberg to suggest that the interplay between Chopin's expansion of the nocturne and the audience's expectations concerning the genre led to a change in the genre of nocturne itself.

Ethnomusicology has in the past been more concerned with style, and with the classification of musics, than with genre. Even the recent *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music* has no entries concerning genre itself as a subject. Similarly, seminal texts in ethnomusicology such as Bruno Nettl's *Theory and Method in Ethnomusicology* contain a chapter on style focussing on musical classification, but no notion of genre (Nettl, 1964).

However, recent ethnomusicological works, such as Christopher Waterman's *JùJú* (Waterman, 1990), Veit Erlmann's *Nightsong* (Erlmann, 1996b), and Paul Berliner's *Thinking in Jazz* (Berliner, 1994) focus on genres of popular music. These works include considerations of predecessor genres, accounts of genre formation, sonic and formal features of the music, audiences, performance spaces, geographic considerations, iconography of album art – in short, nearly all formal and historical aspects of a popular music genre. Some studies primarily connect genre with a notion of musical style and the representative qualities of that style, that is, what stylistic elements have gone into a genre and what identities these elements connect with or represent (Waterman, 1990, 8).[9]

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[8] Musicologists are following both common definitions and those used in art history, defining genre as "A category of art distinguished by a definite style, form, or content" (American Heritage Dictionary, 1980b)

Other studies, particularly those focussed on Latin American musics, expand the musicological idea of genre history cited above in that they examine in detail the social histories of genres and their changes in performance and reception over time *as the genre's relationship to particular social groups changes over time* (Glasser, 1995; Austerlitz, 1996; Savigliano, 1995).[10] This understanding of a social history of genre is applicable, for example, to the different names given to Christian popular music used in worship over time, as I outlined in chapter 2. While this understanding of genre history might not as obviously be connected to hymns, it nonetheless may be pertinent to changes in repertoire of a hymnal over time. For example, while at the turn of the century gospel songs were understood as entertainment for Mennonite young people for use in a mid-week meeting,(Klassen, 1999 (1989)) they now are understood as hymns, part of Mennonite hymnody for use in the Sunday worship service by adults.

Popular music studies scholars have seen genre as consisting of "musical characteristics," non-musical characteristics such as iconography, and the audience (Shuker, 1998, 147-8). Franco Fabbri (1982) influentially characterized genre as including musical style and not only the audience but also performance spaces and codes of behavior observed by the audience. Simon Frith (1996) follows and expands this definition, arguing that genre is a field of social activity concerned with music. This field represents social formation of people with many shared values of aesthetic preference in music (and other values) but with enough diversity and conflict concerning these values to allow for social growth and change within this community of listeners. Adam Krims (2000) extends this argument by showing that musical poetics, in the case of rap music, are socially defined through popular discourses centrally involving the audience and the music industry; in other words, genres as musical forms (with particular musical poetics) are socially defined through the activities of the various players involved in the genres.

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[9] See also David Coplan's use of Anna Royce's definition of musical style as "the whole complex of features that people rely on to mark their identity" which "provides a foundation, a vocabulary of forms, activities and occasions which constitute and express social and cultural processes" (Coplan, 1985, 4); this definition of style is similar to the definition of genre I propose here. However, it focusses on the music's symbolic or representative functions and moves from there to the social structure, rather than vice versa.

[10] Similarly, popular music scholar Keith Negus (1999) has argued that industry and audience interact to create genre, so that the industry markets genres in response to what intermediaries see as the desires of the audience.

I would broaden the notion of audience in these understandings of genre using the idea of the "scene." Will Straw (1991, 373) has defined the scene as a particular social space in which a range of musical practices co-exist. A scene can be broader than an individual community, and indeed can confound common understandings of community by being a space where members of unrelated local communities nonetheless interact. Musical practices within the scene can change. These musical practices can confer identity on the scene. However, the scene can also influence the perception of music as related to identity since the scene itself is related to the identity of the persons inhabiting its social space. A scene might be understood as a geographically non-specific audience: i.e. the "Contemporary Christian Music scene" is the space of CCM practices and audiences everywhere. This geographic broadening is particularly appropriate for mediated (and popular) music, such as the media pertinent to this study: hymns in print media and CCM on compact discs.

The strength of the understandings of genre represented in popular music studies is in their identification of genre's social currency between related groups. This concept of genre allows for an understanding of genre as related to social identity: genres constitute certain social structures, such as rehearsals and performance styles, and articulates with others, such as correlating with belief systems and ideologies. Because genres are part of interactions of both their adherents and detractors, for example chorus fans versus chorus detractors, they are salient in identifying these adherents and detractors. This concept was played out ethnographically in understandings by participants, who were aware of genres, and of strong relationships between social structures and the musical forms. In my research, participants used genre as a key to understanding the identity of others and their own identity in relation to these others, *in terms of their musical practices and the social structures they engender and value systems with which they articulate.*

Genre as I am proposing it, then, includes musical characteristics, non-musical characteristics such as iconography, performers, and scenes (or audiences) and their associated senses of identity. Genre also relates to specific social formations such as bands or other performance groups, roles such as band-leader, and processes such as rehearsals and performances. Genre as characterized here is a construct of music's relationship to identity which is broader and more flexible concerning multiple and even symbolically contradictory musical practices than are most ethnomusicological theorizations of musical form or performance and identity. This flexibility is gained because this formulation of genre derives its relationship to identity primarily from the circulation of musics between different audiences or scenes, membership in which constitutes one register of identity, rather than from the representative functions of music.

In the previous chapter, I characterized the conflicts between Mennonite churches concerning music as focussed on debates concerning genre. The understanding of genre as a field of social activity, including both musical style and behavior, allows for an examination of the impact of genre on the social structure of a church. I address this in this dissertation by selecting three churches with different collections of genres, thus allowing contrasts between the social structures engendered by the performance of different genres to emerge.

Genre also provides an analytical middle ground, a referent between musical content and social context, to borrow Regula Qureshi's frame (Qureshi, 1986). While genres of church music are not as strongly structured in terms of reference to spiritual state or identity as is the musical grammar of Qawwali, their sounds are flexibly and broadly connected to religious identity in that they are practiced by groups which have shared theological norms and a sense of solidarity and identity – for example, Christian contemporary music to evangelical groups and theologies. Such connections allow a particular Mennonite church or Mennonite person to place themselves socially within the broader Mennonite group, through their participation in church music performance.

Genre may allow one way to navigate the diversity of identity and musical practice which confronts Mennonites today. By examining Mennonite churches which by and large use several different genres of music, and by examining a context in which they perform music together, I can observe processes by which genre allows for the navigation of a particular Mennonite church among other Mennonite churches.

## 3.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, I surveyed theorizations of individual and group identity and music's involvement in its construction in ethnomusicological identity studies and Mennonite studies; these theorizations are foundational to this study, setting up concepts of the ethnic and religious group and music's constructive role in identity.

I critiqued current theorizations concerning their focus on a single register of identity, and their understanding of music as primarily representative of identity. I argued that various registers of identity can be theorized as multiple points of identification for an individual or group, and that the practice of music in worship, organized and made meaningful by genre, is key to the construction of group identity for Mennonites.

These arguments form basic premises for this dissertation which are necessary to my foci on music and individual identity, music as a social structure, and genre and group identity; in addition, these premises motivate my choice of ethnographic fieldwork and the ethnographic interview as research method, and my analytic method of examining social structures related to music in the church and perceptions of genres between churches.

# Chapter 4

# First Mennonite Church

## 4.1 Introduction

### 4.1.1 The Yellow Pages Sing Scarlatti

*Fieldnotes 11/19/00*

*This morning, we got a ride with Greg and Jennifer. We arrived at church just a bit late, as church was starting—halfway through the opening song, "We Will Sing for Joy" by the Yellow Pages.*[1] *There are 15 of these young Yellow Pages, singing a unison piece by Scarlatti. Sherry's a classical music fan, and she promotes things like Scarlatti for this group, even though it's not "kids music."*

*I looked at the program and saw "Abide with Me," a gospel hymn, on the program for the Yellow Pages. The woman next to me leaned over and said "the reason they're doing that is because my daughter wanted that song sung... she saw it lying on the piano bench and asked Sherry if they could do it and so they are!" The Yellow Pages then sang "Abide with me" from memory—I think the mother next to me was proud.*

*After the benediction, the Yellow Pages sang a closing song, "Go Now In Peace" (from the Hymnal), as a round song. They sang in tune, and in tempo—memorized. It is remarkable what such a young group is able to per-*

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[1] The Yellow Pages were named after their original uniform of a yellow shirt, which is no longer in use.

*form.*

## 4.2 Tradition, Memory, and the Invention of Tradition

Regula Qureshi (1997) has argued that the sound of musical instruments can "mean" by connecting to wider social forms of cultural memory. Memory in this social sense is an archive of what is seen as the tradition of a social group – for example, the tradition of the Swiss people embodied in the sound of the Alpen horn. Maintaining such traditions, or shared cultural memories, is an important task for group identity since differentiation from others is essential to the processes by which identity is created and maintained, including processes involving music (Stokes, 1994a). In other words, musical sounds need guardians in order to continue to function in constructing an identity for a social group.

However, such traditions are always constructed relative to whatever social and cultural referents are important to a social group. This idea is underlined by Peter Manuel's studies of diasporic musical traditions, in which musics which play the role of connecting a group in diaspora with its point of origin are shown to be quite different from the musics of the point of origin (Manuel, 2000, 1997-1998). Both the sounds and the significance associated with these sounds constitute a tie with the past and with origins, which is always being constructed in the present. The guardians of a musical tradition are also, to a significant degree, the inventors of that tradition.

Processes of maintenance and invention of musical tradition find a religious analogue in processes of sacralization and secularization. Sacralizing processes mark off ideologies and beliefs as proper to a religious group, and serve the function of strengthening religious identity (Mol, 1976, 15). Secularizing processes, on the other hand, represent an intrusion of mainstream society into the space of a religious group, so that boundaries between the group and the society begin to dissolve, and with them the identity of the group (Harder, 1975, 300).

How does music function as a form of maintenance and invention of tradition in a religious group? How are systems of meaning associated with music, such as the connection of music with an ethnic identity, maintained while changes in musical practice and meaning, such as generational change, occur in the surrounding society? These questions are relevant to the understanding of music's role at First Mennonite Church.

## 4.3 The Where: First Mennonite Church

First Mennonite Church is situated south of the North Saskatchewan river, near the industrial end of the city and just down the street from the Asian Christian Association of Alberta building and the multi-ethnic neighborhood of Millwoods. There are major thoroughfares to the south and east of the church, separating it from the residential areas of Mill Woods and connecting it to the car dealerships and the many South Asian shops of 34th Avenue.

The church is a new and elegant white church building, featuring the logo of the General Conference Mennonite Church displayed prominently on its spire. Inside, the church is a work in progress. Much of it is finished in the clean white style of many newer Mennonite churches. However, the focus of the building—the sanctuary—was at the time of this research unfinished. The foyer leads into a multi-purpose room—destined to be used as a gymnasium and banquet hall, but currently serving as the sanctuary and chapel—with very high white ceilings and the long shape of a gymnasium. The congregation sits in movable burgundy chairs, facing the front of the room and its frequently changed banners and other visual symbols.

An organ and a piano are situated at the front left side of the sanctuary, risers and a platform in the middle, and the choir and worship leader sit at front facing the congregation. The congregation sits in two sides of rows with

Figure 4.1: Photograph of First Mennonite Church Streetcorner

a centre aisle down the long room, facing the front—families with children at the back, everyone else mixed together. The music includes choirs singing classical and new choral music and congregational singing of contrapuntal German hymns, English and American anthems, and new hymns from around the world. Hymns are sung confidently by the congregation (not by the choir) in four-part harmony with piano accompaniment, but without a conductor. The order of service conforms to the "traditional" service type which I outlined in chapter 2.

Many members of the church are classically trained as musicians, and there are a significant number of professional musicians who are members of the church—including music academics, performers, teachers of performance, and professionals who record music for radio and compact disc. There are three choirs, each with a choir director and pianist: the Yellow Pages, including singers in primary school; the Youth Choir,[2] a group with singers from junior

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[2] As of 2003, the Youth Choir has disbanded and most of its members have been absorbed into the adult choir.

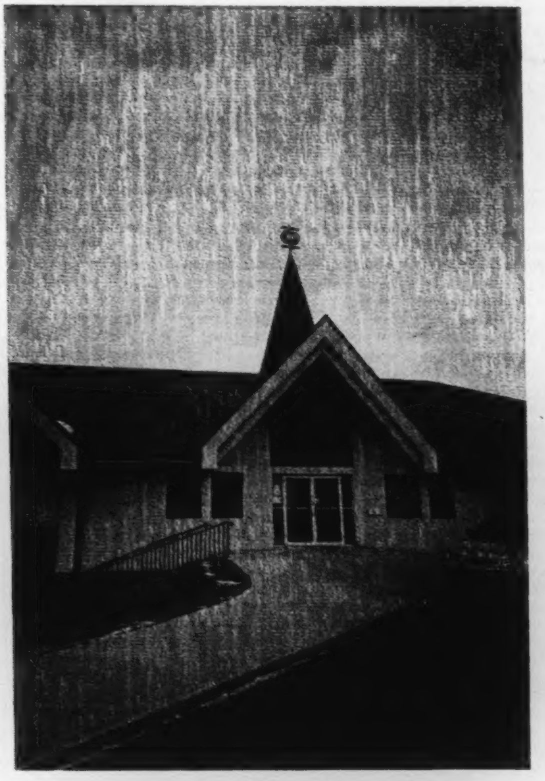


Figure 4.2: Photograph of First Mennonite Church

Figure 4.3: Photograph of First Mennonite Church Foyer

high school, and Adult Choir, with members from high-school age to adult. Furthermore, children are taught hymns and other songs every Sunday morning.

First Mennonite Church began meeting in 1950, originating with the urbanization of rural Alberta General Conference (Russian) Mennonites, many of whom came to the city because of the University of Alberta. The congregation consisted primarily of students at first, and employed English in its services during the 1950s, well before many other Alberta Mennonite congregations, a controversial and liberal choice in Alberta Mennonite circles (Epp, 2000).

The church's membership currently stands at about 179 (Epp, 2000). First Mennonite Church's membership consists of a majority of Russian Mennonites, many of whom are from Alberta originally, and a significant number of whom are second or third-generation members of First Mennonite Church. Of course, many church members are of other backgrounds—including English Canadi-

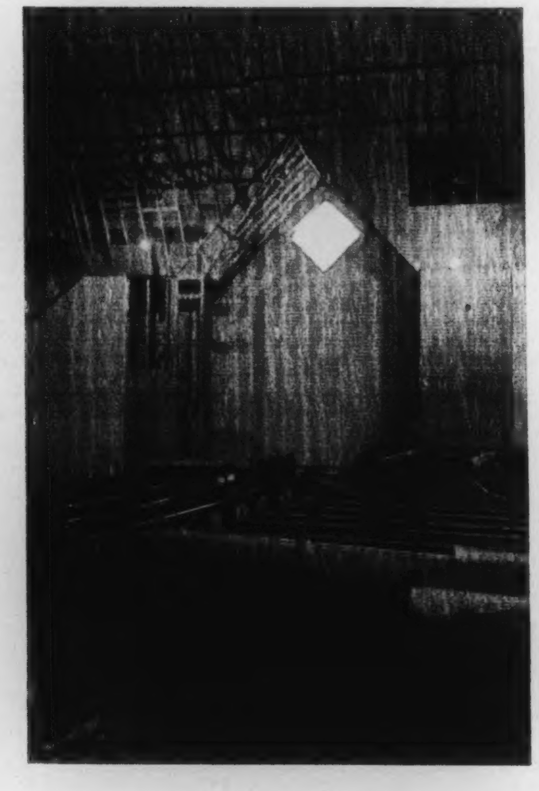
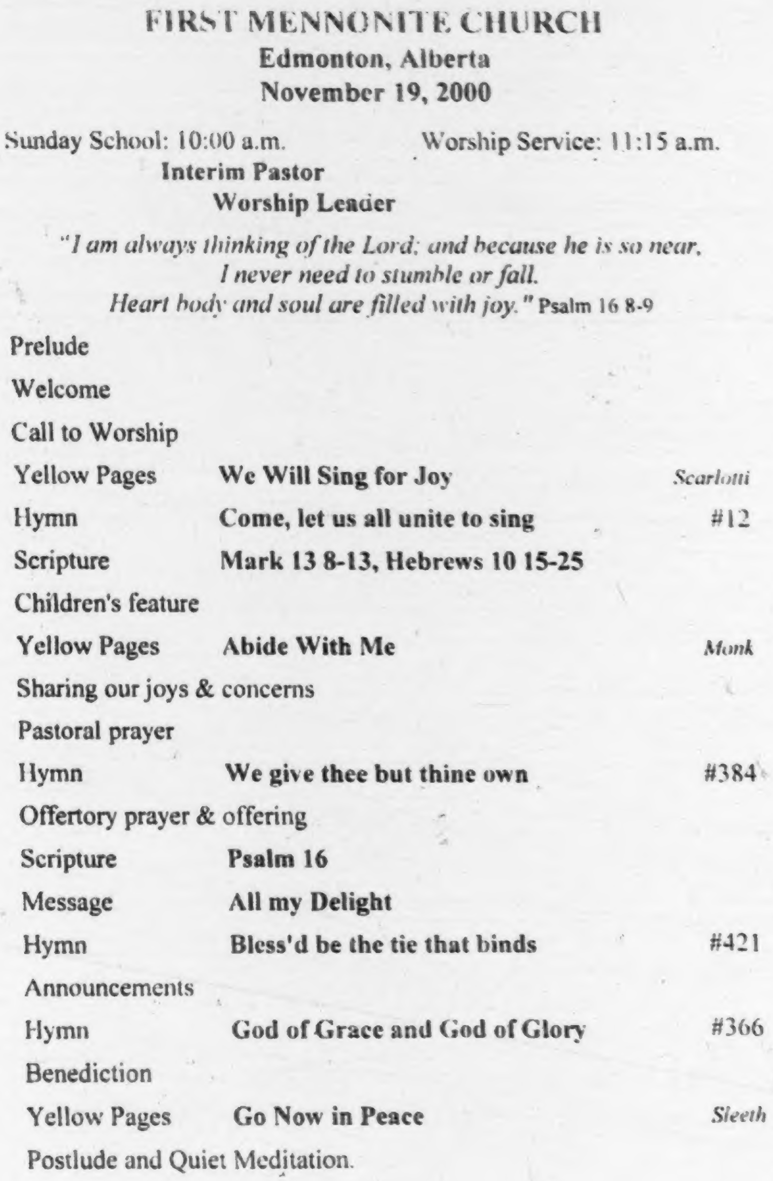


Figure 4.4: Photograph of First Mennonite Church Sanctuary



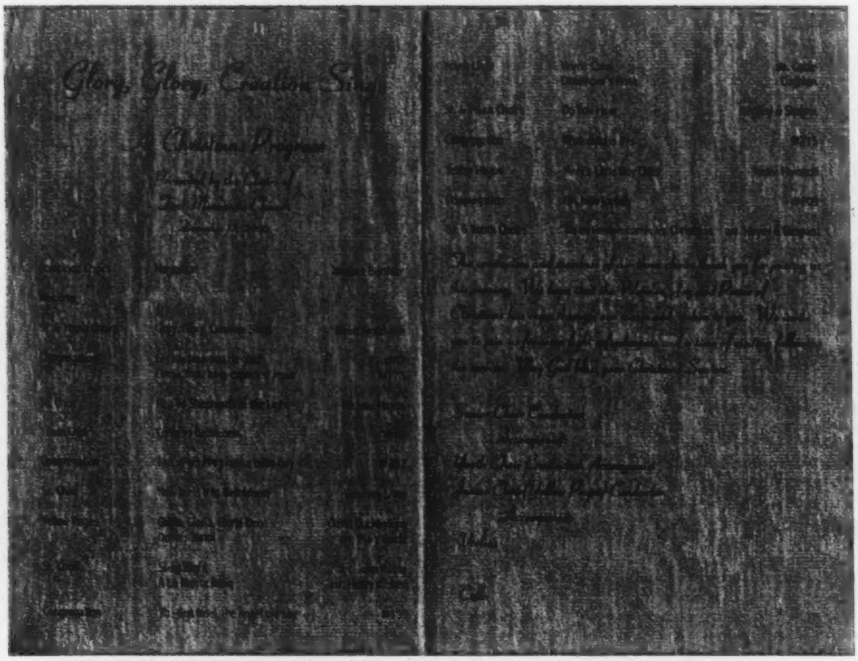
FIRST MENNONITE CHURCH
**Edmonton, Alberta**
**November 19, 2000**

Sunday School: 10:00 a.m. Worship Service: 11:15 a.m.
**Interim Pastor**
**Worship Leader**

*"I am always thinking of the Lord; and because he is so near,*
*I never need to stumble or fall.*
*Heart body and soul are filled with joy."* **Psalm 16 8-9**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Prelude | | |
| Welcome | | |
| Call to Worship | | |
| Yellow Pages | **We Will Sing for Joy** | *Scarlotti* |
| Hymn | **Come, let us all unite to sing** | #12 |
| Scripture | **Mark 13 8-13, Hebrews 10 15-25** | |
| Children's feature | | |
| Yellow Pages | **Abide With Me** | *Monk* |
| Sharing our joys & concerns | | |
| Pastoral prayer | | |
| Hymn | **We give thee but thine own** | #384 |
| Offertory prayer & offering | | |
| Scripture | **Psalm 16** | |
| Message | **All my Delight** | |
| Hymn | **Bless'd be the tie that binds** | #421 |
| Announcements | | |
| Hymn | **God of Grace and God of Glory** | #366 |
| Benediction | | |
| Yellow Pages | **Go Now in Peace** | *Sleeth* |
| Postlude and Quiet Meditation. | | |

Figure 4.5: Photograph of First Mennonite Church Bulletin



Glory, Glory, Creation Sings

A Christmas Program

Figure 4.6: Photograph of First Mennonite Church Christmas Program with All Choirs

ans and Swiss Mennonites. The church continues to draw students from the University of Alberta, and this part of its membership is transient. First's membership is diverse in terms of age and in terms of occupation; there is a significant professional segment of the church population, including at least 20 PhD's and MD's.

Institutionally, First Mennonite is affiliated with Mennonite Church Canada through the Conference of Mennonites in Alberta.[3] First Mennonite Church has been a strong supporter of Camp Valaqua, the camp of the Conference of Mennonites in Alberta, both in terms of sending campers and sending staff persons.

First Mennonite Church maintains strong connections with Rosthern Junior College, a Mennonite high school. First Mennonite's strongest Mennonite college connections are with Canadian Mennonite University (formerly with Canadian Mennonite Bible College) in Winnipeg. Not only do many college-age students from First Mennonite attend CMU, during the time when I pursued my fieldwork at First Mennonite, the board chair of CMU was a member at First Mennonite.

Many members value the intergenerational nature of the church. The web site of the church emphasizes the intergenerational nature of music at First Mennonite, describing it as "a rich heritage of choral music from early childhood through adulthood" (First Mennonite Church, 2002). The church's strong institutional ties with the wider Mennonite world and its own traditions of music and inclusion of all age groups in these traditions, seen as common property, make it a church rich in opportunities for music and a fascinating place to study Mennonite music-making.

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[3] In 2002, the conference changed its name to Mennonite Church Alberta; however, I will use Conference of Mennonites in Alberta to refer to the conference here, since during the time of research that was the name of the conference.

### 4.3.1 My Relationship With First Mennonite Church

My relationship with First Mennonite Church is friendly and close, for a fieldworker-field relationship. My parents attended this church when they lived in Edmonton in the 1970s, but it was too far from my home near the University for me to attend when I lived in Edmonton. Nonetheless, through living and working in the city I became good friends with many persons who are members of First Mennonite.

When I decided to ask First Mennonite if the church would be willing to participate in my dissertation research, the church warmly accepted this. Church members worked to include my wife and me as members in the church and church community during my time of fieldwork there. I was privileged to participate in young adult events, as well as wider church social events, and also to sing in the choir on several occasions.

The following fieldnote is typical of the friendly interactions which I had with folks at First Mennonite, and of the self-conscious way in which many participants represented themselves to me as a fieldworker:

*Fieldnotes 1/14/01*

*Today is my day to videotape a service here at First Mennonite. I stand at the back with the video camera and watch members stream in, finding their seats. Dwayne stops to talk with me as he walks in—he asks if I've gotten everyone's permission, their "actor's rights" to be videotaped! Well, I say, it was voted on at the congregational meeting—but of course, he's just joking, laughs, and walks to his seat.*

This openness of church members concerning my fieldwork role differed from that of the other churches. This suggests to me that among the three churches, First Mennonite Church's members may have had the greatest understanding of my fieldworker role and the information I might need in such a role. More frequently than at other churches, participants at First Mennonite made interpretive comments and offered background information concerning the musical practices of the church – such comments were sometimes offered by whoever was sitting next to me during the church service.

## 4.4 Two Kinds of Music-making: Choirs and Congregational Singing

There are two primary avenues of music-making at First Mennonite: choirs for each age group, and congregational singing. Since the two are largely parallel processes, except during Sunday morning worship, I will discuss the roles and processes important to each in two sections: first, choirs then congregational singing.

### 4.4.1 The Who: Important Roles in Choral Singing

Key roles in choral singing at First Mennonite include the choir directors, pianists, choir members, and the congregational members. Table 4.1 summarizes these roles and key processes for choral singing at First Mennonite Church.

Choir leaders select repertoire which is performed by their choir, conduct a weekly rehearsal with the choir, and lead the choir's Sunday morning performance. I will mention several commonalities and differences about the persons who were choir directors during my time at First Mennonite. Choir directors included several ages, from young adult to middle-aged. Two choir directors were women and one was a man. All choir directors had grown up at First Mennonite Church, and had been a member of the choirs as a child. All choir directors had formal classical musical training and most were trained in conducting at Canadian Mennonite Bible College (now CMU). Most choir directors were involved in community music activities outside of the choir, including professional musical activities.

Pianists aided in leading weekly rehearsals by accompanying, and also accompanied the choir's singing on Sunday morning, excepting of course a capella pieces. Most pianists were women, but one man was a pianist at First Mennon-

| Role Number | Role | Gender and Age | Processes |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | choir leader | male or female, young adult to middle-aged | 1, 2, 3 |
| 2 | pianist | female, young adult to middle-aged | 2, 3 |
| 3 | choir member | n.a. | 2, 3, 4 |
| 4 | congregational member | n.a. | 3, 4 |

| Process Number | Process | Participants |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | repertoire gathering | 1 |
| 2 | weekly rehearsal | 1, 2, 3 |
| 3 | Sunday worship and performance | 1, 2, 3 |
| 4 | feedback | 3, 4 |
| 5 | loop | |

Repertoire Source: N.A. (Choral repertoire)

Table 4.1: Roles and Processes in Choral Singing at First Mennonite Church

ite during my time there. Pianists had a high level of classical music education, and most were involved in music-related professions, such as piano teaching. Most pianists came to First Mennonite as adults, from other Mennonite church backgrounds. The pianists who played for choirs also played for congregational singing.

Choir members included persons who had not yet reached junior-high age, for the Yellow Pages children's choir, persons who were junior-high age, for the Youth Choir, and persons high-school age and up for the senior (adult) choir. Besides the age distinctions, the diversity of singers in the choirs reflected the demographics of the church, including mostly persons of Mennonite background, but some of non-Mennonite backgrounds, and representing a variety of occupational backgrounds.

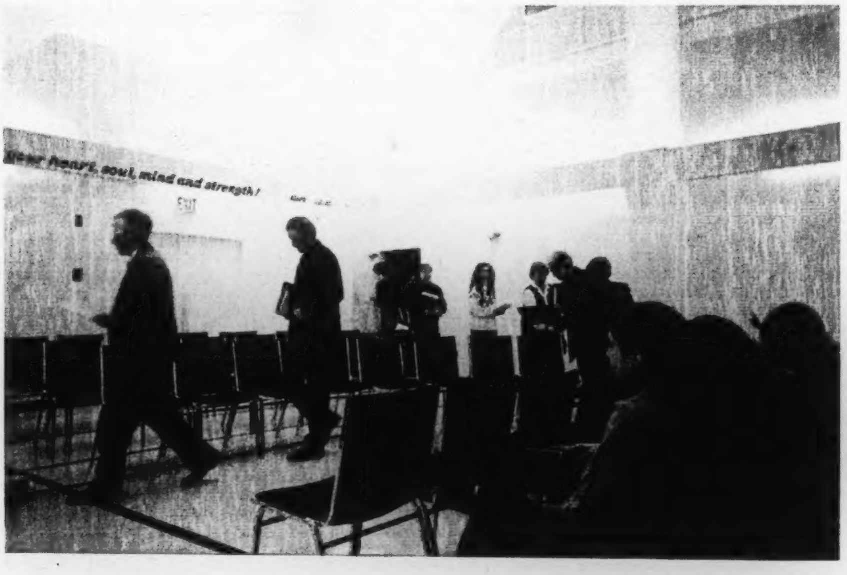
heart, soul, mind and strength!
EXIT

Figure 4.7: Photograph of First Mennonite Church Choir Entering the Service

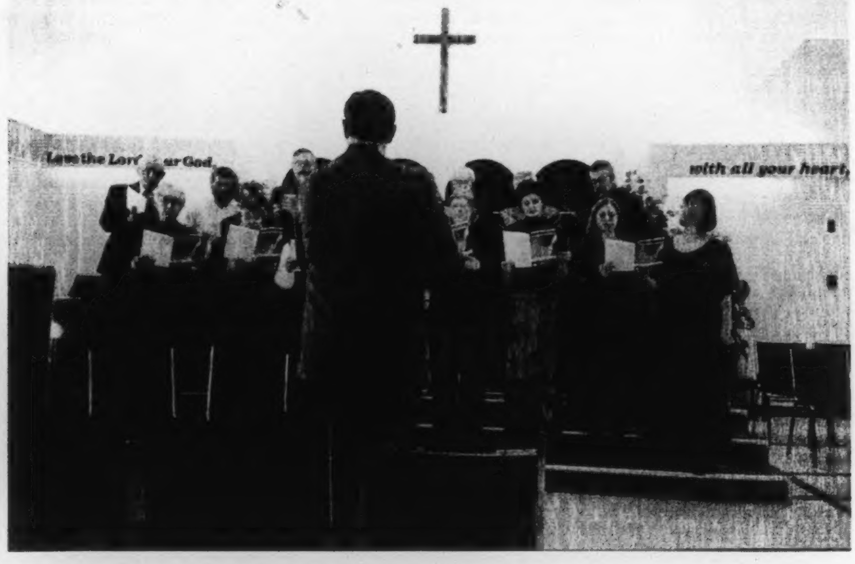
Love the Lor
ur God,
with all your heart,

Figure 4.8: Photograph of First Mennonite Church Choir Singing

### 4.4.2 The What: Important Processes in Choirs

#### Repertoire Selection

Each choir leader selects the repertoire for their choir. Choir leaders select music which they see as suited for the age of their choristers. Choir leaders also make choices based on their own expectations and preferences, such as the selection of a Scarlatti song for the Yellow Pages children's choir.

While the senior choir director often chooses music considering the function of a particular piece in a worship service, different criteria applied for the Yellow Pages. The director of the Yellow Pages explains these criteria in terms of the function of the repertoire: fun participation in church rather than liturgy.

> These are kids who are coming on their own time, so let's make the singing fun, let's make it worshipful... I take a look at the Scripture passages and try and incorporate that... It doesn't always work, and I kind of figure that children's choir, they can get away with quite a lot...

Selection of repertoire by choir leaders is influenced by their choristers, who give them feedback concerning their selections. As one choir member put it: "As a choir member I make suggestions—both underlining stuff I find great as well as naming the dismal stuff."

#### Weekly Choir Rehearsals

Choir leaders organize and run weekly rehearsals for their choirs. These rehearsals are jointly held on a weeknight. They are organized so that rehearsals for the various age groups overlap. Parents with young children bring their children for the Yellow Pages rehearsal; while these children are rehearsing, the parents sing in the senior choir rehearsal (held in the sanctuary). The Youth Choir sings in another classroom during this time. When the Yellow Pages rehearsal is over, the parents with young children take the children home. Then the remaining adults and the Youth Choir sing together for the remainder of the rehearsal.

Rehearsals for the choirs are extremely important to music-making at First. They are not only a space for learning music and musical skills; they are also a time in which the conductor and choristers negotiate repertoire and performance choices. Through the reactions of choristers while singing, such as singing tentatively, or informal conversations with choristers, the opinions of the choristers concerning the repertoire and performance practices are made known to the choir directors.

The pianist helps in leading the rehearsal. They may offer input in terms of verbal feedback, such as catching note mistakes on the choir's part and offering corrections. Their performance and its coherence with that of the conductor is key to the success of the rehearsal.

One conductor and pianist described their relationship working together in the choir. Both felt that they knew each other very well, and worked well together—expressing appreciation for each other's musical gifts and co-operation. However, their perspectives differed slightly in that the conductor felt that the relationship was primarily collaborative, while the pianist felt that while she often made her own decisions, this collaboration needed to be compromised at times in order to follow the direction of the conductor.

The pianist described the relationship in this way:

> When I'm playing for the choir, then of course I'm following what [the conductor] wants. [We] have played together for so long, we have done this together... that we have a really good read of what each other wants. I mean, I read [the conductor], but I think there are times when I take control. Just because there's something that I think should go slower, so I don't play it faster. Unless [the conductor] really gets on me! As an accompanist for a choir, I'm required to follow the director... right?

The conductor, on the other hand, felt that he had worked with the pianist for some time, and that the leadership of the choir was largely collaborative; they had influenced each other so that it was easy to know what the other wanted to do. While both conductor and pianist considered the rehearsal to be collaborative, the conductor did not read authority into the relationship in the same way that the pianist did.

#### Congregational Members and Feedback

While congregational members have the least direct input on the choice of music which is performed on any given Sunday, their influence is profound, both on the selection of repertoire and the performance of it. Congregational members influence musical selection by responding through conversations with other members, leaders of choirs and pianists, and especially through responding to the worship committee or worship leaders. Worship committee members, worship leaders, and the pastor can pass on feedback to choir directors or members.

### 4.4.3 The Who: Important Roles in Congregational Singing

The key roles in congregational singing at First Mennonite include the following groups of people: the pastor, the worship leader, the pianist and the congregational singer. Table 4.2 summarizes these roles and key processes for congregational singing at First Mennonite Church.

The pastor discusses the service, including its music, with the worship leader, either on the telephone or in person. The worship leader chooses the hymns that are to be performed, and their place in the service. Most worship leaders were middle-aged. Some worship leaders had grown up at First Mennonite Church, but the majority of worship leaders came to First Mennonite as adults, from other Mennonite or other church backgrounds. Most worship leaders were college-educated.

| Role Number | Role | Gender and Age | Processes |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | pastor | male, middle-aged | 1 |
| 2 | worship leader | male or female, middle-aged | 1, 2, 3 |
| 3 | accompanist | male or female, young adult or middle-aged | 2, 3 |
| 4 | congregational member | n.a. | 3, 4 |

| Process Number | Process | Participants |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | repertoire gathering | 1, 2 |
| 2 | planning performance | 2, 3 |
| 3 | Sunday worship and performance | 2, 3, 4 |
| 4 | feedback | 4 |
| 5 | loop | |

Repertoire Source: Hymnal

Table 4.2: Roles and Processes in Congregational Singing at First Mennonite Church

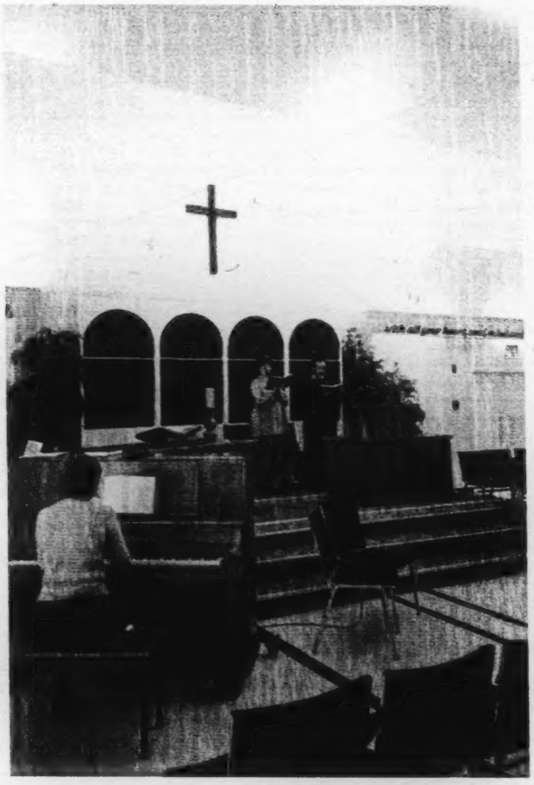

Figure 4.9: Photograph of First Mennonite Church Pianist

The pianist plays the hymns along with congregational singing on Sunday mornings.

### 4.4.4 The What: Important Processes in Congregational Singing

**Repertoire Selection**

The worship leader picks the hymns to be done on a particular Sunday. A number of participants suggested that the worship leader is in fact the key role in influencing what the musical experience of a particular Sunday is like. Typically, the worship leader works with the pastor on designing the worship service, so the pastor influences the decision of what hymns to pick.

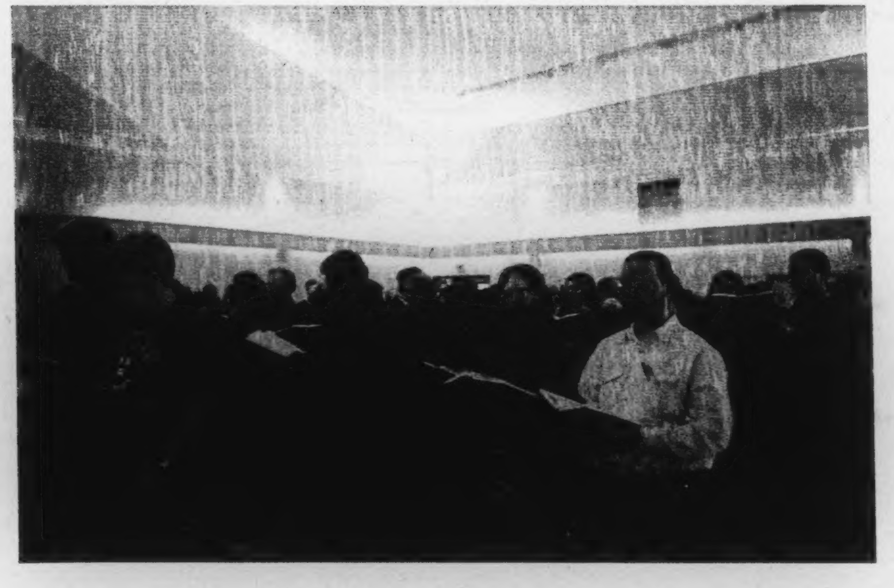

Figure 4.10: Photograph of First Mennonite Church Congregational Singing

Virtually all hymns sung at First Mennonite are picked from the blue *Hymnal*.[4] On only one occasion during my fieldwork was a song from another source sung, this being from the *Sing and Rejoice* book (Schmidt, 1979). Worship leaders were familiar with many of the hymns in the *Hymnal* and also with the resources in the hymnal, such as topical and Scripture indices, and used these to select hymns. Figure 4.11 shows a *Hymnal*, maintained by the church and placed in the church office, which has a listing of every time a particular hymn had been sung; this was sometimes used as a reference by worship leaders or the pastor.

Each worship leader to whom I talked had a different process of picking hymns. Jennifer, a younger worship leader, really enjoyed picking the hymns; rather than choosing music based on the themes and scriptures of the service, she usually just picked her favorite hymns. Most worship leaders felt, similarly, that personal preference was an important consideration in picking hymns for

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[4] As such, all references to the *Hymnal* refer to the 1992 *Hymnal: A Worship Book* (Slough, 1992).

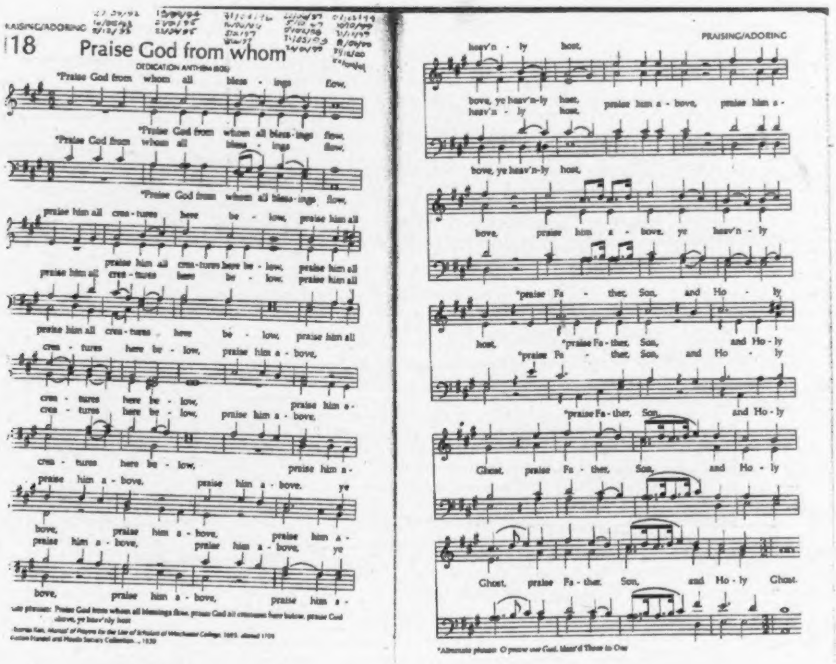
PRAISING/ADORING
118 Praise God from whom
DEDICATION ANTHEM
PRAISING/ADORING

Figure 4.11: Photograph of First Mennonite Church Hymnal with Listings of Dates on which a Hymn is Sung

a Sunday.

An older worship leader described his process in picking hymns. It was methodical, beginning with the theme of the Sunday, worked out in collaboration with the pastor or speaker, and then moving to a large list of hymns which related to that theme, selected using the indices of the *Hymnal*. Out of this group of hymns, he then picked the hymns which he felt to be most singable: "When I'm worship leading you're sure that you're going to be able to sing what's there."

Some worship leaders did not feel themselves or their role to be particularly musical. One worship leader, a self-described non-musician, was uncomfortable with the role of picking hymns, feeling that others might perhaps have made more informed choices. Beyond being certain that the hymns he picks fulfil the various functions of hymns in the service, including gathering, praise, response to the sermon, and sending, he often simply picks hymns which are familiar to him.

The relationship between the worship leader and the pianist is an interesting one: the worship leader acts as the "architect" of a service, which the pianist then performs. Most pianists whom I spoke with were happy to play the music given them by the worship leader. Most worship leaders did not consult with the pianist as to their preferences for music to perform. However, some pianists expressed a wish to have some "say" in the repertoire they would lead.

Some worship leaders did work with pianists on repertoire selection. One pianist described this interaction: "Sometimes there's been a worship leader who's not as comfortable picking hymns and they'll say these are some I was thinking of, is there anything else you can think of to go along with this theme? And then working with the worship leader happens..."

### Pianists as Songleaders

Pianists do not only accompany the congregation in Sunday morning singing. In practice, the pianist's role was similar to that of a conductor: the pianist changed tempo at important text stresses and phrase endings, and paused for breaths. The congregation usually followed the pianist's leading closely, with a minimal amount of "push and pull" between pianist and congregation in terms of tempo. Sometimes, however, pianists surprised the worship leader and congregation by choosing to perform a hymn differently from the norm.

Many pianists with whom I talked perceived their role as song*leader* rather than as an accompanist. One pianist described this role as follows:

> ...you're going to set the tempo in the way you do the introduction to the hymn, and you have to be strong enough in the way you play that if that's the tempo you want you're going to keep it, and not slow down because everyone's singing a little bit slower...I see myself more as a songleader.

Another pianist described her playing as interpreting the text of a hymn by the way she played it from the keyboard: "...you know, one verse needs to be louder than another because it's got, you know, more joyful part to it, or if the next verse is something that's going to be more prayerful then it's going to be a little quieter. And you can do that just in the way you started off that verse. This congregation is great in following."

### Congregational Singers Lead During Performance

Another music leader in the church, however, suggested that certain individuals within the church who are strong singers make it possible for congregational singing to be done without a songleader. By virtue of singing and listening carefully, these singers lead other singers around them so that the church's singing stays together in good ensemble.

> What they don't understand is that the pianist is leading them... And those [pianists] that do it well, do it extremely well, and those that don't, what they don't realize is that there's a handful of us in the congregation that take it over. And so when we have a pianist that doesn't do well, then we work a lot harder. We pick it up, and are really watching and seeing what's going on...

This idea of a core of singers underlines the role of the congregation as "the choir" for hymn-singing, and as such the congregation can make hymns work or make them fail. They are co-performers with the pianist, and their performance can influence further repertoire selection by the worship leader, since the worship leader can evaluate the success or failure of their choices on whether or not "the congregation can sing it," an observation which is cognizant of the fact that the congregation may not *want* to sing it.

## 4.5 A Performance

The following fieldnote describes and offers some commentary on the music for a typical service at First Mennonite Church. Repertoire selected from both traditional and new hymnody is typical of a First Mennonite Church service, as is the sound of piano songleading and congregational singing.

*CD Video Example 4.1: First Mennonite Church Music 1/14/01*

*Fieldnotes 1/14/01*

*As people begin to be seated, the college-aged pianist walks to the piano at the left front side of the room, and sits, opens a score and begins to play a beautiful short classical piano piece.*

*As the pianist plays, congregational members walk by me and say hello. They chat with each other, walk to their respective places in the congregation, and sit in the chairs—either in families or in groups of friends. Children make a good deal of commotion, and parents catch up on the activities of the week with each other. The pianist continues to play, swaying gracefully on the piano* *bench, and draws to a close*

*Tom, the worship leader today, steps up to the pulpit at the front of the church, sitting on top of a raised stage, and welcomes everyone to church.*

*Tom asks everyone to stand for "our first hymn, number seventeen, "We Gather Together."' No other introduction is given to the hymn; instead, as everyone stands, the pianist (already sitting at the piano) begins to play the introduction to the hymn, with a good deal of volume and rhythmic clarity. The worship leader also acts as a performer, an exemplary worshipper who is a "presence" on stage at the front of the church, influencing others by their actions.*

*Her introduction, as is often the case, is the end of one of the hymn's verses. It establishes tempo and some aspects of melodic phrasing from the very beginning. She slows slightly at the end of the introduction, then a brief pause for breath, and then begins the first verse. A nearly inaudible split second after she hits the first chord, the congregation enters with confidence, and the room is full of rich four-part harmony singing. This hymn is ideal for the sound that First Mennonite produces: a four-part Dutch hymn from the sixteenth century, adapted in 1877 to its present form, as it now appears in the Mennonite Hymnal.*

*After this first hymn, a boy from the congregation joins the pastor and worship leader up at the front of the church. These two look on intently as the boy reads our scriptures of the day. After he sits down, Tom again rises to announce the worship music—again, very prosaic, "Catherine and Emily will now provide us with some worship music." Tom sits, and everyone listens intently as Catherine and Emily, a mother and young daughter, walk to the front of the church and begin to play. Catherine, a slight-bodied woman with tremendous presence, accompanies her daughter, with simple four-part chords, on the piano; Emily sits, violin cradled properly, and plays the melody of "O Thou in Whose Presence," a hymn from the Hymnal. This hymn is ideally suited for the violin—or perhaps a fiddle!—since it is an American folk-style* *hymn of the nineteenth-century, which has been arranged in four parts by Mennonite musician J. Harold Moyer in 1965. The piano is simple and sparse; the violin is played non-vibrato, competently, with the melody swelling tastefully as it rises up the scale, and falling as it descends. The congregation is much quieter for this music than they were for the prelude—it is, after all, placed centrally in, rather than peripherally to, the worship service.*

*After this hymn, we all sit. Then the pastor rises for the sermon...*

*After the sermon, the worship leader invites us to stand and sing "Lord, You Sometimes Speak in Wonders." The introduction to this is not the end of a verse, but rather a pianistic "interlude" that goes between each of the verses. This hymn is dramatically different from the first two: the congregation sings relatively short phrases in unison, punctuated by very short piano interludes, and then a longer interlude between verses. The text, in modern language, addresses God directly, i.e. "Lord, you sometimes speak in wonders," rather than describing God, or being a narrative about the relationship between God and God's people. It has the sound of modern popular British choral music (of the style popularized by, for example, John Rutter). This is a "new" hymn, with a text by British Anglican clergyman Christopher Idle set to music by Christopher Johnson in 1967.*

*This hymn's difference is interesting for two reasons: first, this hymn was most likely chosen by the pastor, rather than the worship leader, to respond to the text of his sermon, accounting in some part for its difference, both in musical style and in compositional time period, from the first two hymns of the service. Secondly, despite its difference from the hymns chosen so far, it is sung confidently and competently by the congregation. This may be due to the fact that the choirs of First Mennonite do sometimes sing popular-style British choral music. Thus, the significant portion of the congregation who does sing or has sung with the choir, would be very familiar with this style of music.*

*After this hymn, the offering is taken. Then there are announcements.*

*After the announcements Tom asks us to sing the final hymn "You are the*

*Salt of the Earth," and to remain standing for the benediction after this hymn. This hymn, composed by Minnesota folk-style liturgical composer Marty Haugen is a new hymn that is well-known in many General Conference Mennonite Churches. It is also in unison; here the pianist plays with us again. The chorus (punctuating the verses of the song, just as the popular-music choruses do) when we sing it together, bursts into harmony and people clap in rhythm with it.*

*This hymn shares many features in common with the choruses that are nearly universally rejected at First Mennonite, including a verse/chorus structure, monophonic melody, and clapping. However, it is distributed as part of the Hymnal rather than on a compact disc or overhead transparency. Looking to my right, I can see a very young girl—maybe three or four years old—standing on a chair, singing while looking at a hymnal that her mother holds for her. I see an older, white-haired couple, to their right, holding a hymnal and singing together.*

*This is a remarkable instance of music's role at First Mennonite: sharing a text which symbolizes tradition and connections across a wide and diverse Mennonite world, which changes over time itself, but which provides a place for families and friends to embody their tradition and modernity together, all at once, in song.*

## 4.6 Tradition and Inclusivity: Values and Music at First Mennonite

There are two important values which are primary to musical practice at First Mennonite Church: a sense of continuing First Mennonite's singing traditions, and a sense of including all generations of church members in musical practice. While these two ways of valuing musical practice may seem contradictory, at First Mennonite they function well together. In the following sections, I will examine these values in a succession from tradition to inclusivity, arguing that inclusivity in musical practice allows for the continuation of musical traditions.

### 4.6.1 Music and Russian Mennonite Tradition

There is a strong sense of the Russian Mennonite background of the congregation at First Mennonite. Musical practices are seen as representing this tradition; specifically, this tradition is signified by the performance of Germanic hymns in four parts, accompanied by the piano. This sense of an ethnic tradition is sometimes explicitly discussed, but more often it is assumed.

The sense of a dominant Russian Mennonite tradition emerges more markedly when musical performances are pursued by those who are not of this background in a manner which does not conform to the congregation's sense of Russian Mennonite tradition. For example, on one occasion, a songleader led a preservice hymn sing, and the singing of "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow,"[5] a popular hymn which is popularly known as "the Mennonite national anthem," a capella rather than from the piano. The songleader contextualized her a capella preservice sing as being due to her Swiss Mennonite background—an appeal for the participation of the congregation in a style of performance which was perhaps new to them. Later in the service, the pastor noted that this performance had been in a style representing a Swiss Mennonite background.

That these ethnicities play into congregational life was serendipitously emphasized by the adult Sunday School series, focussing on Mennonite history, which was ongoing on the same week as this a capella performance—this series focussed on Russian Mennonite history, but also had one Sunday focussed on Swiss Mennonite history, which was contextualized as "the background of some of our members."

Interestingly, this sense of an ethnic tradition of musical practice did not necessarily function to exclude congregational members who were not of Russian Mennonite background. For example, one participant, who described himself to me as a "Mennonite adoptee or an hybrid of some sort," explicitly mentioned Russian Mennonite singing tradition as one of the things he valued most about First Mennonite Church.

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[5] The version referred to here is also frequently called "606" among Mennonites, after the number of the hymn in the red *Mennonite Hymnary*.

Although an adoptee, this interviewee was nevertheless a guardian of Russian Mennonite singing tradition: "...I loved the music, I loved the harmony, and the fullness of it all, and I have to admit that now that we get into these...other alternative pieces...I miss that fullness of what I always came to know in the Mennonite background as being the four-part harmony, rich and good." Thus, in this instance, an ethnic singing tradition proved portable enough to be adopted by a church member not of this background.

### 4.6.2 Music and First Mennonite's Own Tradition

First Mennonite Church's own musical tradition invokes a network of inter-church connections; just as the place of First Mennonite in the Conference of Mennonites in Alberta was determined in part by their selection of English rather than German as the primary language of worship services, their selection of particular kinds of music place the congregation relative to other congregations in the Conference of Mennonites in Alberta.

For example, a congregational leader suggested that the rejection of more contemporary styles of music at First Mennonite Church was due to the comparisons made between the music of First and the music of other Alberta congregations in which some of First's older members grew up.

> ...the worry here is...that the four-part harmony tradition will die, that traditional music will die. I don't see it, not here anyways. It partly goes together with their having rejected, in coming here in the '60s, some of them are leaving a background behind which in fact, in their view of how things have gone in the 80s and 90s in where they came from, has gotten worse. And there is a fear on their part that some of this music is a slippery slope.

This was also true of younger members from elsewhere. One young member described the move to choruses in his home church in Coaldale as "not Mennonite," in comparison to music at First Mennonite: "It's the whole, maybe the electric, you know they've got an electric guitar and a drum kit kind of thing. It's not Mennonite. It's too elaborate. It's not Mennonite."

Traditional hymns which were seen as folk music were also not considered part of First Mennonite's tradition. German hymn singing at First Mennonite draws more on German chorales and classical German music than it does on folk-style German choruses, such as *Friedensfurst*, a popular German Christmas song sung at many Southern Manitoba Mennonite churches. One young man, who grew up in a Russian Mennonite context outside of First Mennonite, noted this reaction:

> there would be almost an elitism... all my family, we get up and we sing it every Christmas, every time we get together we sing "Friedensfurst." And it will never be sung [here]... I can't tell the difference between, you know, looks like a classical song to me, it's got four parts. But I've been told, I asked, "Why don't you sing that?" and been told "It's not proper music."

### 4.6.3 Differences of Opinion on New Music in the Hymnal

As might be inferred from the above, the new repertoire in the blue *Hymnal*, particularly the Hispanic, African, and new-liturgical (Taizé and Iona) music, is controversial. Several participants noted that this new music in the *Hymnal* was the greatest musical change during First Mennonite's history:

> I think it has changed. How it's changed, with the new hymnal, I would say significant... we used to stick pretty strictly to the hymnbook... and it didn't have the variety, the cross-cultural things that this one has.

As might be suggested by the idea of maintaining a hymn-singing tradition, some participants felt uncomfortable with this new repertoire. For example, one middle-aged participant felt "silly" having to sing songs so far removed from his own background:

> Sometimes these middle Eastern, or African, maybe even the odd Asian tune in there... always strikes me strange... The *Sing and Rejoice* songs, the songs that come out of that, the sort of camp songs, I mean, I find them sometimes a bit annoying too, but they are a more natural extension of what we do.

On the other hand, some younger and middle-aged persons, particularly with connections to Mennonite church schools, saw this new repertoire in the hymnal as representing "contemporary music" for First Mennonite: an acceptable relationship to modernity, maintaining both the hymnal, symbolic of Mennonite tradition, and also a connection to the present-day Mennonite world, particularly to the global context of Mennonite voluntary service through the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) development agency. For example, one young participant gave the following account:

> I think I find it a bit more meaningful doing the Swahili and stuff, during church, because Mennonites as I see it have a large part to do with other countries. And personally I find it more meaningful, if the congregation is more involved with what MCC does... As little as it might be, singing songs like that kind of brings it out. You know?

### 4.6.4 Pianist as Songleader: The Value of Not Being Led

Interviewees frequently expressed a preference for the style of songleading at First Mennonite: that is, the use of a pianist but not a conductor. Two reasons were mentioned for this: the musical proficiency of First Mennonite Church, and the feeling of not being led in worship.

Several interviewees suggested that since First Mennonite has so many musically proficient singers and pianists, songleaders are superfluous. This was seen as a local tradition to First Mennonite, rather than a broadly Mennonite tradition; most participants who had grown up in Mennonite churches remembered songleaders in their home congregations. First's pattern of congregational singing was seen as a mark of musical competence: while most other Mennonite congregations *need* a songleader, First Mennonite is able to sing on its own without such additional help.

In some cases, interviewees contrasted the skill of congregational singing at First Mennonite with the skill of some songleaders. As one interviewee put it: "In the service, I think the pianist is, in our church, very important, because we don't have songleaders. I think that's a blessing, because songleaders are silly, they stand up here and wave, they haven't any idea how to conduct, I haven't seen a single one so far who actually knows how to conduct. And nobody looks anyways because they're all reading their hymnals. So I appreciate the fact that we don't have songleaders."

On the other hand, many congregational members appreciated the feeling of freedom associated with not having a songleader—that is, they didn't want to feel "led" during worship. One participant suggested that singing at First Mennonite gave her a feeling of closeness to God, due to the fact no-one led the congregation in singing and thus singing focussed on God rather than on a leader:

> *V*: I don't like to be led. OK, that much. So unless I have a high level of trust and appreciate what they're trying to make me do, then I don't particularly want to go there.
>
> *J*: How's that different from the pianist? Because as you said, and in my opinion, the pianist does lead too. They set tempos, and

> decide where you can breathe or if you have time to breathe, and they do that...
>
> *V*: I think it has to do with the sense of singing as a congregation towards, I want to sing towards God as a group, not towards a conductor. It has a different feel for me, and I don't know why that is exactly. Because as you say I grew up with it, and all my training, always, was led!

### 4.6.5 Hymns Versus Choruses

Choruses are commonly contrasted to the hymn-singing practice at First, which represented a Mennonite tradition for participants. Hymns represent a valuing of the Mennonite community, by embodying it in congregational four-part singing. Hymnals articulate continuity with a shared communal past, through continuing to use a shared archive of traditional hymnody.

The frequent use of pejorative terms for Christian popular music, including "throw-up music" and "off-the-wall music," referring to the use of an overhead projector instead of a hymnal, and "Jesus-is-my-boyfriend music," referring to the music's emulation of popular music styles and lyrical elements, underlines the emphatic nature of this contrast.

Four-part hymns were frequently described, textually and musically, as "deeper" than choruses—since hymn verses change, there is a linear progression of thought seen as absent from choruses, and four-part harmony of a Wesleyan or German-chorale type which is seen as more musically complex than choruses.[6]

Younger participants, on the other hand, also felt that hymns were preferable to choruses, but not because choruses were popular music. One interviewee, a young musician, felt that the problem with contemporary styles of church music is that they are a poor cousin to secular popular music. In other words, popular church music is not seen as authentic popular music.

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[6] This is of course, arguable; for example, chorus performances employ many different instruments, improvised rhythms and harmonies, syncopation, "blue" notes, and a considerable electronic production apparatus, lending a good deal of complexity and musical "depth" of a kind which is absent from hymns. I am relating arguments from the perspective of many participants at First Mennonite rather than advancing a claim for the superiority of one or the other kind of music.

One participant pointed out that the difference between choruses and hymns at times had nothing to do with their lyrics or style of music, but rather (as is suggested by the common pejorative term "throw-up" for this music at First Mennonite) had to do with the media by which they were presented: the one projected on to the wall, and the other in a hymnbook produced and shared by the entire Mennonite community.

The performative aspects of the two are contrasted; hymns are seen as both requiring and allowing everyone to be an equal part of the performance, whereas choruses are seen as overpowering the congregation's voice through amplification, so that one can participate or not with little difference in the final performance. One music leader described this difference in terms of the kind of community embodied in performing hymns versus that of performing choruses:

> For me, and for some of us, it's the whole concept of what is singing together, what is congregational singing? And it is all of us as equals. . . None of us have any electronic help. And so, we're all together in this. And that is something that, in one sense is modelled by our lack of central leadership, saying we're all in this, doing this worship together. It just doesn't fit to have a group at the front being the worship team to lead our singing.

On the other hand, some participants at First Mennonite feel that it may be possible that choruses will someday be a part of worship at First. One participant related the following story about planning the new chapel. At a worship committee meeting, addressing the way in which the new sanctuary should be organized to allow for music-making, someone said "well, I'll just say it. I'm not saying it will ever happen here, but if it did, where would we put the praise band in the new chapel?" Everyone laughed, and then said "well, if worse came to worst we'd put them here." The humor of this story suggests reservations about the genre, but an awareness that unexpected musical change including change of genre, can happen over time.

Similarly, in an interview which I pursued with a father and son together, the middle-aged father had very little use for choruses, while the son was much more tolerant of their use, at least in other churches. The father stated, "I don't even have to hear it... I walk into a church and see or hear its beginning and I walk right out." His son responded, "Well, if it does something for someone that's great. I'm glad. It's not my thing, but I see that it can be valuable for some." His father backpedaled slightly and came to the very interesting following position: "Well, I agree with that but I'm glad there's a wall between my church and that church, and that I can meet with those people on the parking lot."

### 4.6.6 Excellence and Inclusivity: The Problem of Professionalism

Due to the high level of musical proficiency and training among music leaders at First, a frequent theme in discussions was a worry over professionalism: while music leaders in general wished to see a high level of musical performance at First, they also were concerned to keep musical performance an open option for a wide spectrum of congregational participants.

Performers who were music professionals found this worry to be an obstacle to their participation in performance at First Mennonite. Some performers who were professional musicians suggested that at times they would refrain from performing so that no-one would feel that the standards of performance were too high for an ordinary congregational member to attempt.

On the other end of the spectrum, the abundance of skilled pianists at First Mennonite and the high congregational expectations of them proved to be discouraging to some participants. One young person who grew up at First

Mennonite, for example, told the story of their discouraging first attempt at accompanying hymns at First Mennonite. This person is a capable pianist, though not an expert. This person was asked to fill in as pianist on short notice for a service. When the person accompanied for this service, they made mistakes on an improvised introduction to a hymn but otherwise did well. However, after the performance, the participant remembered comments primarily made about the mistakes. While this person continues to enjoy and be involved with music at First Mennonite, they have not participated further as a pianist.

### 4.6.7 The Value of Family Inclusiveness

Many families sit together as an intergenerational unit, including young adults, who at many other churches sit in groups of young adults. This underlines the fact that First Mennonite is a church where the family is a key organizing structure—this church is a place where people grow up.

One participant suggested that the preferences for hymns and choral music among young people at First Mennonite could be due to the preferences of the parents of these people.

> They ask, well do your youth like this music? And they said, yeah, they do. They had talked to some of the youth and they liked it... And that probably reflects the parents likes and dislikes, they've probably taught their children to sing along and to enjoy the music that's there.

To put this another way, the family unit is responsible in part for young people's participation in choirs and hymn-singing at First Mennonite.

### 4.6.8 Choirs as a Structure of Inclusivity

Different standards are applied to the performance of choral music at First Mennonite, on the one hand, and of piano performances, especially the accompaniment of hymns on Sunday morning. As suggested above, very high standards are expected of the pianist, and negative feedback is given for technical errors in performance. Perhaps this is because of the centrality of hymn-singing at First and the lack of a conductor; if the pianist does not play perfectly, the hymn may not be performed as well or as easily.

On the other hand, the choirs are designed to be inclusive of congregational members—to give everyone a place to sing in church. Most members are encouraged to join, and many congregational members who are not current choir members were at one point.

Both music leaders and congregational participants felt that the choirs at First Mennonite worked to be inclusive of all ages of congregational members. For example, one choir leader described the choir program as follows:

> What it's all about is making sure that there's a place for young people to be involved from the point when they really are eager to be creative, through all of the different transitions towards adulthood.

### 4.6.9 Flexible Standards for Music in Different Choirs

When asked, most interviewees felt that the different choirs at First Mennonite perform different musics, which correspond to different life stages. The choirs are seen as first meeting each person's needs in terms of music at their particular life stage, and second, preparing them for the next stage of participation in congregational life.

For example, one participant described the music of the Yellow Pages as particularly appropriate to children:

> *P*: The Yellow Pages, they do the action songs, you know, with the tambourines and the blocks of wood, and you're more interested in hitting the block of wood than singing. But it's fun, fun to watch. That's fine...

*J*: So what's the idea there?

*P*: To get 'em in.

Another participant similar describes the music of the Youth Choir: "You didn't really want to sing in children's choir 'til grade 9. So they came up with the Youth Choir thing. Because they like to sing and everything, it's just, you can't tackle some of the stuff the adult choir's going to do."

When the youth sing with the adult choir, as noted above, the adult choir too sings this more popular repertoire. In the context of the children's and youth choirs, and the youth-adult choir, none of my interviewees complained about the presence of popular repertoire during the church service.

There is a compromise between tradition and change here: full participation in church is seen as commensurate with choral music in the classical tradition, broadly speaking, and thus with Mennonite tradition as it is seen here. However, children need proper training, affirmation, and socialization to be a part of this full participation, and therefore music which engages with popular culture is important both to attract them to choirs and to teach them choral singing.

Though it is not strictly speaking a choral activity, there is also a musical activity which aims to serve older persons in the congregation. German singing is an occasional musical activity at First Mennonite intended to meet the needs of the older, German-speaking generation of church members. One participant describes it as follows: "A group us from First Mennonite still get together to sing, once a month, in German. And we use the Lieder Album... and the Gesangbuch."[7]

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[7] The ***Lieder Album*** was a German songbook used in the rural Tofield Mennonite congregation, the former home congregation of some of the (German-speaking) members of First Mennonite.

### 4.6.10 Education for Congregational Singing

Those children who are not in choirs still receive early musical training at First Mennonite, through Sunday School singing. This singing prepares children specifically for hymn singing. One participant, who has led Sunday school singing, describes this teaching process:

> I'm trying to do a hymn a month... we talk about meter and tunings, from what era it's been composed in. We did "O Sacred Head Now Wounded," so I talked a little bit about the Reformation, and what that meant for congregational singing. I mean, very pared down, but just so they'd get a smattering of what this means to the church... We learn the piece. The melody. Our kids are awesome in that singing group, they are very quick to pick things up!

Another important category of music at First Mennonite, which is not part of the worship service proper, but which is part of occasional gatherings such as church retreats, and Sunday school singing, are "camp songs." These are popular songs roughly analogous to choruses, sung at the Mennonite camps (and of course at other Christian camps), and spreading from there to other occasional performances in Mennonite churches, though usually outside of the worship service. A young adult participant who has worked at the Mennonite camps, suggests that camp-songs are also important to Sunday school singing at First Mennonite:

> It's always part of Sunday school. Sunday school singing, I'll often get interrupted [by someone asking] "we need you to come in and lead this camp song." If you go in our church right now, downstairs to the children's singing, there's a bunch of camp songs written on the wall. So, it factors in for sure. Especially for the kids. Those songs are written for children...

These camp songs are seen as an acceptable part of congregational life, though in many ways they correspond to the musical features and performance norms of choruses.

### 4.6.11 The Social Function of Inclusive Choirs

Choir rehearsals are a social gathering-time for church members, with the meaningful and enjoyable activity of singing together at their core. Choir members also sometimes use this as a time to socialize after the formal rehearsal; the singing and socializing mutually reinforce the commitment of church members to the choirs, and to choral singing at First Mennonite.

One young adult who sang in the Yellow Pages as a younger child described this experience as key to her present singing activities at First Mennonite. She enjoyed the social aspects of choir, and in addition, learned to sing. When she was in Yellow Pages, the ages were mixed, and younger kids wanted to learn from the older kids, who they saw as "cool." The kids became a strong social group, enjoying the singing together. This youth said she really learned to sing not through technical teaching but by just enjoying the social activity of choral singing.

Another participant underlined the role of the senior choir in keeping intergenerational unity in the church by providing positive social experiences within an age group while at the same time being an intergenerational music-making activity. Young adults in the senior choir enjoy singing with the entire group, but also enjoy the social opportunities it provides for their own age group:

> You have four or five young adults that are in that core group that I was talking about before, so you have other people... they're interested in singing, but it's also a fun time because we'll often go out afterwards. I enjoy the singing too.

### 4.6.12 Performing Music and Producing Musicians

First Mennonite has an abundance of classically trained musicians, many of whom are engaged in amateur and professional music activities outside of church. Most musicians whom I interviewed suggested that there was limited overlap in their musical activities inside and outside of the church.

Some musicians at First Mennonite teach music professionally, such as Elaine, who teaches piano. She works with music at a school. This relates to her music-making in the church in that she learns different things about running a rehearsal in both contexts, and applies these concepts to the other situation. However, she generally does not teach children whose parents are members of First Mennonite Church. The church in this case was not key to her musical activities in the wider Edmonton community.

In other cases, the church has been instrumental in connecting musicians with performance opportunities in Edmonton, both through its Mennonite networks and through its networks (whether arrived at through the church or not) in Edmonton's music communities. As an example, I'll relate the "story" of a First Mennonite Church pianist, Sandra. Sandra grew up in a small town Saskatchewan. She took piano as child and played piano for Sunday-school singing in her church, and later hymn singing. She attended Rosthern Junior College (RJC), a Mennonite high school in Saskatchewan, and both sang in choir and played for the choir and hymn-singing in the school's chapel services. After graduation, she volunteered for a year in the U.S., where she became involved with singing more popular Christian music.

Later on, she moved to Edmonton in part to pursue school. She connected with First Mennonite Church through friends who were also RJC alumni, in other words through connections with the Mennonites schools with which First is strongly networked. Her friends, aware of her musical talents, introduced her to a choir director at First Mennonite, and she has played with the choirs since then. First Mennonite Church has been a place where she has been affirmed for her talents in its mainstream of musical practice, choral singing and hymn singing.

However, First Mennonite has also overlapped with community performance for her through connections made with a local community choir for her by a First Mennonite Church member. This choir performed more popular styles of choral music, with improvisatory, jazzy instrumentals, thus connecting with another part of her musical background — disjunct with the mainstream of First Mennonite Church performance, but nonetheless the connection was made through First Mennonite.

A father and son who perform classically both in the community and in the church, feel that their musical lives are fairly separate, in that few church members attend their community performances. Both father and son feel that performances in either venue are spiritual and worshipful for them. Beyond that, however, there's little overlap. The son says he appreciates both experiences—performing at church has been helpful to his community performances due to the acceptance and practice it has offered.

In fact, several participants who perform in the wider community as young adults and adults expressed the opinion that they "got their start" at First Mennonite Church. Most cited first the opportunities to perform in church, in children's and youth choirs or as special music, and secondly the warm affirmation they felt for these performances, as key to their future pursuance of music as a career. The spheres of professional music performance and church music practice overlap at First Mennonite, in terms of adult members who are professionals and in terms of children and young adults who learn performance skills.

In some cases, these children and young adults become music leaders at First Mennonite Church. This is the case, for example, for each of the choir directors at First Mennonite Church. Each individual grew up at First Mennonite Church, learned to sing in the context of the choirs, furthered their musical skills through professional training, and returned to First Mennonite

Church as a music leader.

## 4.7 Conclusions

The ethnographic narrative of this chapter has emphasized the ways in which First's musical traditions allow for both positive social formations in church, reinforcing group coherence and commitment, and provide a point of identification for the church. At the same time, I have suggested that there is flexibility within the musical practice of First Mennonite, particularly within different choirs and also with the new repertoire found in the *Hymnal*.

Peter Hamm (1987, 252-253), in his sociological study of Canadian Mennonite Brethren, argues that processes of sacralization and secularization form a dialectic: secularization provides for periods of change and flexibility in a sect, allowing that sect to adopt new processes and objects of sacralization in response to changes in broader society. This dialectic allows for the persistence of sectarian religious identity in the constant change of Western society; in other word, secularization provides an opportunity to invent a new tradition to which identity can again be fixed.

Hamm (1987, 11) follows a common definition of a religious sect as a religious protest movement, a religious group whose identity is defined against the values of broader society, including religious society. Given this definition, most Mennonite conferences might understand themselves as sects. As I argued in chapter 3, many processes of identification work similarly by defining oneself against an other.

First Mennonite Church is of course a congregation rather than a sect; however, within the musical context of the surrounding churches, many members of First Mennonite similarly defined their musical practice as a tradition which goes against the grain. They connected this idea of a musical tradition to Mennonite identity.

Flexibility within First Mennonite's understanding of tradition allowed for inclusiveness within choirs, by using simpler and and more popular modern choral music to provide children with musical opportunities and training. The social connections within an age group, and the intergenerational affirmation for children's and youth's musical contributions to church set the stage for these children and youth to adopt new repertoires as they grow older, including the classical choral repertoire and hymnody which is understood as central to First's musical traditions. Though it is not without controversy, the church's adoption of the new repertoire in the *Hymnal* also allows for the self-understanding of the church to adapt to changes in the broader Mennonite church, such as greater connections with Mennonites around the globe through Mennonite Central Committee.

In other words, the maintenance of musical traditions and the flexibility to invent new traditions form a dialectic allowing for First Mennonite's identity to persist and to change in relation to generational and social change in its urban fabric and in its association with the broader Mennonite world.

# Chapter 5

# River West Christian Church

## 5.1 Introduction: This is a Joel Tune

*Fieldnotes River West 2/11/01*

*This morning I got a ride to church with Rachel. We got there at the beginning of the service, but the place was packed and there was nowhere where our whole group could sit. Young persons in the congregation, of whom there are quite a few, are dressed casually, in the "slacker" styles of the current college generation—cardigans, T-shirts, jeans or khakis, et cetera. Middle-aged persons wear relatively casual clothes as well—button-down shirts without ties, slacks, et cetera. Older persons of the congregation are by and large wearing somewhat more formal attire, including dresses, and for the men, button-down shirts with ties and slacks.*

*We finally sat down right at the back next to the guys doing the soundboard. Where we were sitting, I could hear the three young women next to me singing, but not many other people. The capable leadership of the worship team, however, made it easy to learn several new songs, choruses from the Vineyard. The musicians in the worship band seem quite skilled—they performed a song with "breaks" before the beginning of each verse, difficult to keep together in the first place, and then added a very precise bass solo in the break.*

*In the middle of one song, Rachel leaned over and said "This is a Joel tune, Joel wrote this tune"—a catchy praise song with a honkytonk piano part* *and a funky break in the guitar bit. I responded with something like something like, "Cool, sounds like Wilco on account of the honkytonk piano part," and she said, "You think so? Cool, I like Wilco."*

### 5.1.1 Theoretical Starting Points: Evangelicalism and Christian Popular Music

Sociological and cultural-studies work have documented the growth of evangelicalism and its engagement with popular culture. This literature provides a starting point for my discussion of Christian popular music at a Mennonite church.

Mark Shibley (1996), a sociologist, studied recent growth among evangelical churches in the United States, along the lines of two metaphors: the "Southernization" of religion and the "Californication" of evangelicalism. His argument is that expressive, Southern-style religion is growing everywhere except the South. However, it does so by accommodating itself to secular, modern culture, as occurred in a Vineyard Church that Shibley studied in California. This church attracted upwardly mobile youngsters by holding together the binaries of the secular world and the sacred word: that is, both "evangelizing the world. . . [and] remarkable tolerance for cultural diversity" (Shibley, 1996, 107). In other words, the expressive culture of Southern religion provides the ground for "Californication," accommodation between church life and postmodern pluralist North American life. The adoption of popular musics in church in recent years, characteristic of many white evangelical churches, is one example of this accommodation. In this encounter, evangelicalism is transformed by popular culture.

Lawrence Grossberg (1992), on the other hand, offers a critical reading of what he calls popular conservatism, a concept which includes among other things contemporary evangelicalism. Popular conservatism's politics, according to Grossberg, have successfully depoliticized society in the traditional sense, and politicized the immediate and small movements of everyday life instead. They have done this by embracing what he calls the "rock formation"—a cultural nexus, including rock music, of affective investment in escapism from the "everyday." Life then becomes politicized via "affective epidemics," politics of mood rather than traditional politics—such as the health craze or large religious gatherings.

Grossberg's description of the use of a politics of affect by the American right, including the religious right, can be applied to evangelical popular music and the use of popular culture in evangelical worship. While Shibley suggests that in engaging with popular culture evangelicalism is transformed, Grossberg's reading would suggest that evangelicals can also transform popular culture and employ it as a novel way of structuring social life.

Contemporary Christian music (CCM) is a term which encompasses a whole industry of musical products as well as a historical succession of genres in current use by Christians. These genres are used both individually as a mediated product, like a CD, and corporately as music sung during worship services, led by a popular-music style band. This music is thus a connection point between evangelicalism and popular culture.

William Romanowski's writings on the crossover of Amy Grant are illustrative here (Romanowski, 1993). The CCM labels themselves discovered that the lyrical content of early-1980s CCM, and that Christian bookstores, the venue at which most CCM was sold, did not appeal to the majority of Christian consumers. By pursuing a distribution arrangement with mainstream label A & M records, and limiting content in songs which might be offensive to mainstream consumers, Myrrh Records garnered significant sales in the mainstream for Amy Grant. A sociological study by John Edgar Reid (1993) suggests that not only has CCM come to be an accepted mainstream category—it remains in use by Christian youth, both publicly as a form of worship and privately as a cultural form integrating Christianity into their daily life.

CCM, then, is both socially and commercially important due to the active listening habits of its audience. Rather than simply being transformed by popular culture, CCM—and most significantly contemporary worship music, praise songs, and choruses—is the result of a complex and ongoing relationship between the evangelical churches and "the world."

River West Christian Church, the church on which this chapter centres, is an evangelical Mennonite Brethren church, part of this broader media economy. I would like to discuss the social workings of this kind of media economy in a church. What are the social structures by which popular music works in this church? Who makes the decisions as to what music is performed and how – local church people or global media groups? How can the relationship between these two poles be characterized? Another way to put this question is: how are evangelical churches and popular culture a mutual influence on each other?

## 5.2 The Where: An Introduction to River West Christian Church

River West Christian Church is situated north of the river in the city of Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. It is so far on the west end of city that it is surrounded by prairie grasses, grain fields and farm houses. However, it is not separate from Edmonton life; church is held in the gymnasium of Winterburne School, which is a primary school in the Edmonton Public School system.[1] The school has a sign out front designating it as the place of worship for River West on Sunday.

Upon entering the building and going through a short hallway, one sees a transformed gymnasium: symbols of the church's motto on large, suspended hangings outline the front of the church, punctuated by theatre-style track lighting. The congregation sits on blue plastic chairs, facing a collection of risers at front, on which a popular-music setup for an ensemble of drums, pianos, basses, amplifiers, and microphones for vocalists and other instruments

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[1] This school is part of the Logos schools program of the Edmonton Public School system, which allow for religious curricula to be taught in public schools. The school is not a denominational Mennonite school.

Figure 5.1: Photograph of River West Christian Church Surroundings

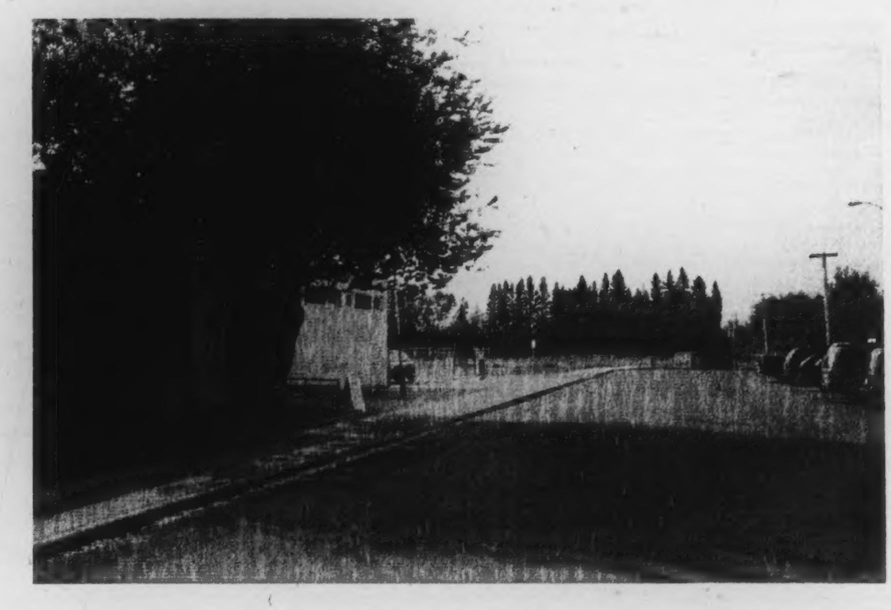


Figure 5.2: Photograph of River West Christian Church School Building

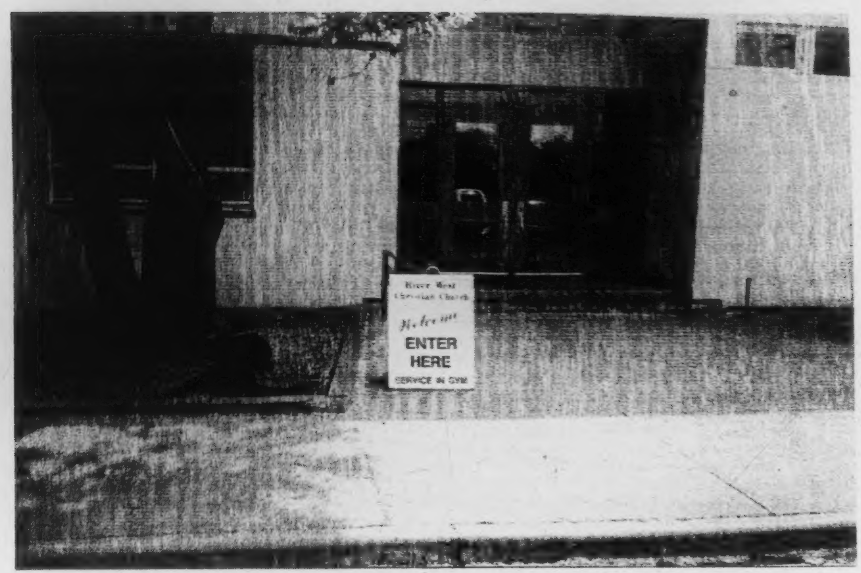


Figure 5.3: Photograph of River West Christian Church Entrance

rests. The movable pulpit is only brought out when the minister is about to give the sermon. To the back and left of the congregation is a small table where doughnuts and coffee are served.

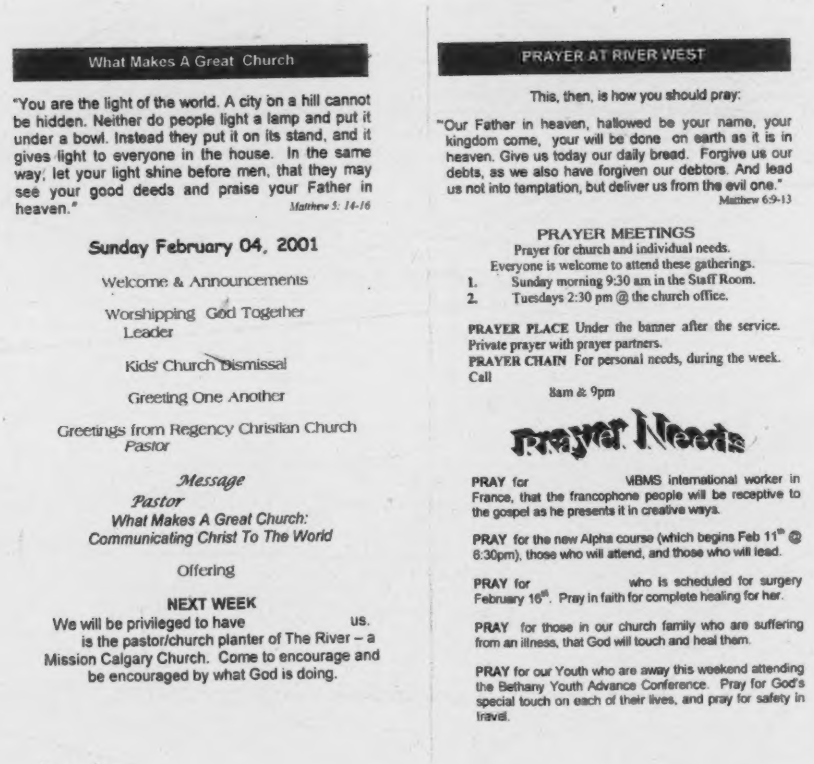
The amplified worship band plays smooth, folk-like contemporary worship music, the likes of which one might hear on a Christian radio station. Music is a key aspect of worship at River West Christian Church. The church's worship music is always accompanied by a popular-music style worship band, and is largely popular-style Christian Contemporary worship music. In addition, most Sundays a hymn will be sung—typically a mainline Protestant hymn of the nineteenth century—in an arrangement for (primarily) unison singing and a praise-band accompaniment.

River West Christian Church began meeting in 1987, as a mission outreach of Lendrum Mennonite Brethren Church (Edmonton) (Epp, 1998 (1987)). At first, the congregation's name was the West Edmonton Mennonite Brethren Church. The congregation was formally organized in 1988, and is affiliated

Figure 5.4: Photograph of River West Christian Church Gathering

with the Alberta Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches and the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches. The name was changed in 1996 to River West Christian Church, in part to convey the idea that this church was for anyone to attend—not just for Mennonites, that is. The church's membership currently stands at nearly 100 members.

The congregation is ethnically diverse, containing a minority of persons originally from River West's "parent" church, Lendrum Mennonite Brethren, which is predominantly Russian Mennonite Brethren, and many persons who have either only recently converted to Christianity or who are from an evangelical background, broadly defined. River West has strong connections to its direct local environs—it not only meets in a school, that is, a publicly owned building, but it also works at local missions in its immediate West Edmonton area. Many of River West's members arrived at the church through a combination of "seeking" on their part, and missions efforts on the church's part.



**What Makes A Great Church**

"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven." *Matthew 5: 14-16*

**Sunday February 04, 2001**

Welcome & Announcements

Worshipping God Together
Leader

Kids' Church Dismissal

Greeting One Another

Greetings from Regency Christian Church
*Pastor*

*Message*
*Pastor*
*What Makes A Great Church:*
*Communicating Christ To The World*

Offering

**NEXT WEEK**
We will be privileged to have us. is the pastor/church planter of The River – a Mission Calgary Church. Come to encourage and be encouraged by what God is doing.

**PRAYER AT RIVER WEST**

This, then, is how you should pray:

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." Matthew 6:9-13

PRAYER MEETINGS
Prayer for church and individual needs.
Everyone is welcome to attend these gatherings.

1. Sunday morning 9:30 am in the Staff Room.
2. Tuesdays 2:30 pm @ the church office.

**PRAYER PLACE** Under the banner after the service. Private prayer with prayer partners.
**PRAYER CHAIN** For personal needs, during the week. Call
8am & 9pm

**Prayer Needs**

**PRAY** for VIBMS international worker in France, that the francophone people will be receptive to the gospel as he presents it in creative ways.

**PRAY** for the new Alpha course (which begins Feb 11th @ 6:30pm), those who will attend, and those who will lead.

**PRAY** for who is scheduled for surgery February 16th. Pray in faith for complete healing for her.

**PRAY** for those in our church family who are suffering from an illness, that God will touch and heal them.

**PRAY** for our Youth who are away this weekend attending the Bethany Youth Advance Conference. Pray for God's special touch on each of their lives, and pray for safety in travel.

Figure 5.5: Photograph of River West Christian Church Bulletin

River West Christian Church supports Camp Evergreen, the Mennonite Brethren camp of Alberta. The church does not relate strongly to Canadian Mennonite University, but cultivates stronger institutional ties to the more evangelical Mennonite Brethren Bible institute in Hepburn, Saskatchewan, Bethany Bible Institute, and to the General Conference and Mennonite Brethren Columbia Bible College in Abbottsford, British Columbia. However, a minority of River West's members connected with River West through the church's involvement in wider, non-local Mennonite Brethren institutions, and a minority of its members continue to cultivate these connections.

This differed from the other Mennonite churches which I studied, for whom broader connections with Mennonites were very important. On the other hand, there may be a sense in which, as has been noted elsewhere, a new evangelical ethnicity is emerging at places like River West. Evangelicals in the U.S. are adopting shared culture and boundary maintenance practices—such as in-group language and shared musical practices—which place them in a proto-ethnic category.[2]

River West's members have a strong sense of an engagement with North American *culture* in the singular—as opposed to cultures (even local ones), or a sense of global multiculture. This understanding is key to the way that the church's music is seen to relate to those outside the church. For example, when I asked one interviewee where the church's musical styles come from, he responded simply, "from the culture!" The informal style of service and intentionally local placement of the church within its community parallel its musical practices: River West wants to be open and inviting to anyone "from the culture."

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[2] Rodney Sawatsky cites evangelical sociologist Jon Johnson, who argues that evangelicals are not only ethnic but ethnocentric; in Sawatsky's words, "for someone not born an Evangelical, who has not gone to the right schools or learned the appropriate in-group language, it is very difficult to break into the centres of Evangelical power. You can attend their churches, but you will always remain somewhat an outsider" (Sawatsky, 1991, 117). With the acquisition of these ethnically closed characteristics, Sawatsky suggests provocatively that an "expatriate" writers and artists community, no longer part of the Evangelical church but still perhaps claimed by evangelicals and claiming an Evangelical identity, will arise, as they have in the Mennonite context.

### 5.2.1 My Relationship With River West Christian Church

My relationship with River West Christian Church was the closest to a traditional fieldworker-field relationship of those with any of the churches which I studied. While many congregational members were friendly to me, I had very few contacts at the church before attending as a fieldworker. I also had the least experience with the format of music and congregational organization which River West represented, and so went in with the greatest level of naïveté as to how to interpret the proceedings.

I had the least open relationship with River West of the three churches I studied. I approached the church through the leadership team, having friendly coffees with the pastor to discuss the proposal, and then awaiting the decision arrived at in a meeting by the leadership team. The team decided to allow me to pursue fieldwork in the congregation, but not to announce it to the congregation nor to invite me to present my preliminary findings to the congregation.

I was welcome to attend, observe, and of course to be honest with those who wished to know why I was there. All participants in interviews, et cetera, were fully aware of my role as a fieldworker and the nature of my research but for the most part I simply attended and took notes. Though I was privileged to attend meetings and rehearsals, I never took part in leading music at River West.

At the same time, the leadership team and the congregational participants with whom I worked were very friendly and helpful to me. I enjoyed my time at River West and benefitted greatly, both as a fieldworker and as a Christian person, from worshipping with this church.

| Role Number | Role | Gender and Age | Processes |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | worship leader | male or female, young adult | 1, 2, 3, 4 |
| 2 | pastor | male, adult | 2 |
| 3 | worship team member | male or female, young adult | 3, 4 |
| 4 | sound person | male, adult | 4 |
| 5 | congregational singer | n.a. | 4, 5 |
| 6 | committee member | male or female, adult | 5 |

| Process Number | Process | Participants |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | repertoire gathering | 1 |
| 2 | worship service planning | 1, 2 |
| 3 | weekly rehearsals | 1, 3 |
| 4 | Sunday worship and performance | 1, 3, 4, 5 |
| 5 | feedback | 5, 6 |
| 6 | loop | |

Repertoire Source: Worship Leader / Marketplace

Table 5.1: Roles and Processes in Congregational Singing at River West Christian Church

## 5.3 The Who: Music-Makers at River West Christian Church

Several roles are important to the making of music at River West Christian Church. Table 5.1 summarizes these roles and key processes for congregational singing at West Christian Church.

The "worship leader" here is perhaps *the* key role. This person not only plays the lead role in performing the songs and leading the songs on Sunday morning, but also gathers repertoire, runs the worship team's rehearsals and meets with the pastor to select music and worship resources for the Sunday service.

Other key roles include the worship team members, the sound person, the congregational singer, and the committee member. The worship team

Figure 5.6: Photograph of River West Christian Church Congregational Singing

members are the performers, and attend rehearsals with the worship leader as well as performing on Sunday morning. The sound person runs the sound board, helping to set up the congregation for performance, and participating in the actual performance both by setting up the mix for the worship team (what they hear) and for the congregation. The congregational member is both audience and performer on Sunday morning. The committee member acts as a liaison between the congregation and the pastor and worship leader.

## 5.4 The What: Processes Important to Musical Performance at River West

### 5.4.1 Sources and Repertoire Selection

When I discussed with worship leaders the networks by which they found new songs to perform at River West, several sources were mentioned. These included a monthly magazine received by the church, called *Worship Leader*,[3] which included a CD recording of new music, worship gatherings within Edmonton, particularly large worship conferences, and CD's put out by the Vineyard and by Maranatha Music, bought at Christian bookstores such as Blessings Christian Marketplace.

Worship leaders try to stay current with what is produced by Christian media groups. When I first attended River West, I called the music performed there "choruses," as this was the generic term used in nearly all other churches I'd attended for church music using a popular-music ensemble. I was soon corrected on this, though; several worship team members pointed out that choruses are a genre which they associated with the 1970s, a part of the historical background rather than the contemporary soundscape of many in the church. Praise and worship music is a generic term associated with the 1980s and early 1990s; the newest wave of this music, and the preferred generic term at River West, is "contemporary worship music." This music includes songs from the Vineyard repertoire and from a recent group of British songwriters called the "British invasion" by many contemporary worship music fans. Sonic differences, corresponding in part to the contemporaneous evolution of secular popular music, characterize the differences between these generic terms.[4]

One worship leader discussed the criterion by which he selected new songs to perform at River West. These included the lyrical content and the "singable" nature of its tune:

> ...for me the song has to be lyrically sound...I have to agree with it. The music has to be good, it has to be singable, fairly easy to

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[3] *Worship Leader* magazine is copyrighted by the Worship Leader partnership. See the following URL: http://www.ccli.com/WorshipResources/WorshipLeader.cfm for further details concerning the magazine.

[4] Deliriou5 and Matt Redmond were mentioned as examples of the "British Invasion" – see the Deliriou5 Website for some song and video samples of Deliriou5 and Martin Smith, http://www.delirious.co.uk/experience.html; this music is British-style pop. On the other hand, see http://www.heartofworship.com/Html/homepage.asp for some samples of Matt Redmond's contemporary folk-style music.

catch on to. Not all of the songs we sing are easy to catch on to...

Besides music which is purchased from these Christian media sources and found at Christian worship conferences, worship team members write their own material. As the fieldnote which opened this chapter noted, one worship leader is a frequent contributor of new songs. Both congregational members and other worship leaders have written songs for worship at River West, and many interviewees mentioned this phenomenon as something that they particularly appreciated about music at River West.

As with popular music generally, then, within the Christian contemporary music world, large media groups do have a tremendous amount of power in deciding what music is circulated, which has an impact on local performances. On the other hand, the performers of this music, in their local performance context, have the ability to put their own music on the same "level," performing the same function as and appearing in continuity with this music – something which, for example, cover bands in the secular music world do not typically have the freedom to do.

### 5.4.2 Holy Spirit Synergy: Planning the Worship Service

After music selection, the next level of decision-making concerning music at River West are the meetings held weekly, during which the worship leader and the pastor, and occasionally other participants, discuss and plan the worship service. One interviewee emphasized especially the rapport between the worship leader and pastor, which is necessary to create an excellent flow of themes and texts in the service: "I would say that there has to be a very close cooperation between the pastor and the music leader and the team." I visited a meeting, and it proceeded as follows: first, the group prayed together. Then the theme and scriptures of the Sunday were introduced, and each person there contributed their vision for their part of the service relative to the theme. The group "participate[d] together in throwing and batting ideas around, and allowing Holy Spirit synergy to sort of –'that's it! that's what we're going to focus on this week, here's our metaphor to build around, here's our theme,"' as the pastor put it.

Worship leaders then select what repertoire will be used for the coming Sunday. This process was highly individualized between the different worship leaders, though most shared an idea of picking songs in part by their tempo and "placing" them in the service with regard to tempo. One worship leader described the process by which he chooses music to me:

> I have this stack of songs, sheets of music. I just lay them out on my bed, have them totally lined up so I can just see the title. I usually put them, sort of fast songs in one pile, medium songs in one pile, slow songs in one pile... We usually start out with fast songs, pretty much praise songs, songs praising God on a level that's very much corporate... horizontal worship, then bringing it to vertical worship. We bring it into more personal, and usually the more personal songs tend to be more medium speed, or slower speed... I see worship as one continuous prayer, we're singing our prayers, and I don't have any problem with singing songs that are personal, that are I-focussed...

### 5.4.3 Rehearsals

Following this level of decision-making comes the worship team rehearsal. I visited several worship team rehearsals to learn what the the rehearsal process was like. Typically, two rehearsals are held: one mid-week, and one prior to church on Sunday morning. During the mid-week rehearsal, the worship team members first set up the risers, drum sets, mike stands, speakers, lights, monitors, and mixing console.

Then, new songs are taught. In the rehearsals which I attended, learning happened in short chunks—jamming on a fragment of the song to get the basic riff. During this process, the sound checks—mic hookups, balance, monitor speaker settings, et cetera—were being done by the sound people. At each rehearsal, a prayer was held near the beginning of the rehearsal.

The rehearsals I attended were structured by the leadership of the worship leader, who supplied the majority of the ideas and taught the new repertoire. These rehearsals were structured with a performance free of breaks in mind: for example, worship leaders generally only ran in entirety new songs which were unfamiliar to the group, instead focussing on "joins" between sections, tempo and key changes, of songs which were more familiar.

Other group members, however, did offer suggestions as to how songs should be performed. For example, Joel had written a slow introduction for one song, which then hooked into the faster-tempo (Latin guitar rhythm) main verse. He tried it with the band, starting solo and having everyone else come in on the fast section, but it was too hard to follow and didn't sound together. The trumpeter suggested a short break and then a new tempo sounded out on the drum sticks by John—a move which both sounded clean and worked to keep the group together through the tempo change.[5]

The midweek rehearsal is the major rehearsal; on Sunday morning, the second rehearsal was primarily a prayer time and a single run-through of the "joins" for the morning's songs. Prayer is important at these rehearsals, helping to cement the team as a group and to make clear the purpose of the group. I was included in the prayer of one team meeting which I attended. We stood in a circle, holding hands, and prayed that God would bless our worship and enable us to lead others into worship. The feeling of togetherness, and of a group purpose, was powerful.

As this description of the rehearsal process would suggest, the sound of the group is influenced very strongly by one individual, the worship leader, but the worship leader's vision is filtered through the performances and suggestions of other group members, including the sound team.

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[5] This idea for a tempo change may have come from the trumpeters background in ska and punk music; it is a common way to change tempo in these genres.

### 5.4.4 Amplified Praise: the Role of the Sound Person

I discussed the role of the sound person, who sets up the mix for both the worship team and the congregation, with several different practitioners of this role. One suggested that the primary aim of the sound person is to make sure that the congregation can hear both the band and each other, so that the congregation feels like a group:

> I think it's important to make the congregation feel like a group. You don't want to be sitting there, like at a concert and you're an observer, when the congregation is singing or clapping or whatever, participating in that, you want to be able to hear that. What's happening on stage cannot drown that out. So that's our peg in the sand as to how loud we can make it. If you're not hearing the congregation, as well as what's going on on the stage, then you're too loud.

In a sense, the sound people are ultimately responsible for what the congregation hears of the worship team, since the worship team members cannot hear what the mix in the congregation sounds like. While this may be true of other forms of non-amplified church music—for example, a vocal soloist in a church can only guess what his or her voice sounds like out in the congregation—in this case another person is involved in mediating the sound, who, due to their physical position, at the back and centre of the congregation, *can* hear what the sound is like in the congregation.

## 5.5 Performance: Sunday Morning Worship

The most typical pattern of music at River West is a block of songs played at the beginning of the service, for about a half hour, to which the congregation sings along. The physical and emotional engagement of the congregation with the music is an important dimension of this performance, as the band and congregation watch and listen to each other closely. Following this block of songs, called "Worshipping Together," the pastor gives a sermon, which is followed by a song played as benediction. This conforms to the pattern of the contemporary worship service outlined in chapter two. The following fieldnote demonstrates a typical performance of several songs at River West.

*CD Video Example 5.1: River West Christian Church Music 5/27/01*

*Fieldnotes 5/27/01*

*The band is already standing on the risers at the front of the gymnasium, as everyone walks in the brightly lit room, festooned with sports banners, and with the banners symbolizing the church at front. A young man plays trumpet, two young women sing, a young woman drums, two thirtyish men play piano and bass respectively, and a college aged man sings lead vocals and plays guitar. The very live acoustic of the gymnasium booms with the sound of the amplified band, playing and singing a prelude, and with the din of everyone saying hello to each other and slowly finding their way to the blue plastic seats.*

*The pastor, casually dressed in a button-down shirt and sweater, stands and walks to the front of the church. The pastor waves and smiles, introduces himself by his first name, and welcomes everyone to the congregation, especially visitors. When the pastor seats himself, the lights dim and a middle-aged woman moves to the front right of the gymnasium, and puts an overhead on a projector, containing the lyrics to the first congregational song, "King of Love." The young man with the guitar sets the pace by strumming the riff of the song, and then begins to sing as the other instrumentalists and congregation join in. The congregation stands for this song. The piano rises and falls in the texture, accenting the sweet love-ballad lyrics of the song: "my lover's breath is sweetest wine, I am His prize, and He is mine." The song is by Kevin Johnson, and copyrighted by the U.K.-based Kingsway's Thankyou Music—the home of Matt Redman and Delirious—which is partly owned by the EMI group. The sound of* *clapping is very prominent in the congregation—though only the persons at the front of the congregation appear to be clapping; this song is very well-known to the group, having been sung frequently over my time as fieldworker at the church. The pastor is dancing at the front of the church, and on the chorus raises his right hand to the sky, symbolically receiving the blessings of the Holy Spirit.*

*As the last chords of the song ring out, Joel, the guitarist, begins to play the riff of the next song, "His Love Endures Forever," a much quicker, guitar-driven song with a call-and-response structure within the verse. This song is published by the Vineyard, a (non-denominational) North American evangelical group famous for popularizing this contemporary style of worship. After Joel finishes this quick riff, the other instrumentalists join him and he sings the call portion of the verse: "He made the heavens and the earth," to which the congregation, accompanied by the two female singers and the trumpet (on the melody), respond, "His love endures forever." This pattern continues for each verse, with the same acclamation given to the narrative of God's creation and redemption, sung by Joel. Immediately before each chorus (following each verse), the trumpet plays a short and rhythmically punchy tag based on the melody of the verse. The sound man carefully responds to the proceedings from the back of the church, looking down to be sure the tape and mixing board are set and adjusted properly.*

*The next song, entitled "How Deep the Father's Love for Us," is a "modern hymn"—four-four beat, slow and structured in verses, with relatively archaic language such as "how deep the Father's love for us/how broad beyond all measure/that He should give His only Son/to make a wretch his Treasure." Though it was written in 1995, and published again by Kingsway's Thankyou Music, its sound recalls older English and English-American gospel hymns of the late nineteenth century. The congregation quiets further with this song, as does the worship band. What is particularly interesting is the choice of instruments to lead this song: the piano provides the strongest chordal accompaniment for it,* *while the other instruments fade to the background of the worship band's mix. During the last verse all the instruments surge together, and the congregation's sound rises with the worship band's crescendo: "but this I know with all my heart/his wounds have paid my ransom." This is the slowest song thus far, and recalls hymnody very strongly; the mood felt in the congregation is the most reverent at this point. When the song ends, it is briefly quiet...*

*The sermon follows the singing. After the sermon, the service ends. The worship band regathers on stage to play a "postlude," one of the day's choruses, a slower ballad, without singing. The congregation rises spottily, one by one, the doors open and light pours in from the spring morning outside, and the congregation disperses for the week.*

## 5.6 Performers and Media

More than the other churches I studied, River West throws into sharp relief an interplay between mediated, commercial music and the performance of music in church. I will examine several aspects of the participation of the leaders in church performance, moving to observations concerning their place in a broader media economy.

### 5.6.1 Leaders and Worship

All of the various music performers and intermediaries are understood by congregational members in the context of worship. For example, when I asked a committee member for his description of these important musical roles, he offered me the following:

> Sound person: should have the keenest musical ear and technical understanding to help provide the musical union/unity of worship team and congregation. Worship team person: attentive to Holy Spirit in their responsibility to lead congregation in worship and praise and in unity with the worship team. Pastor: give pastoral

> guidance to worship team committee member: be aware of congregation participation, responses, needs. Congregational singer: respond to/participate in musical expression regardless of talent...i.e. to honour God in music.

Many respondents emphasized the centrality of each of these actors participating in worship while they perform their role in the worship service—without participating in worship themselves, the assumption is, they will not enable others to worship. This is of paramount importance, as the committee member's statement suggests, since worship is the key experiential value in musical practice at River West for most participants.

### 5.6.2 Leaders and the Edmonton Music Scene

Highly contingent and individual stories bring the performers at River West together. As an example, I'll relate the "story" of one of the sound engineers, Russ. Russ was raised a Lutheran, he attended a Lutheran school 'til grade 7. Here he was exposed to piano-organ hymns, due to the fact that the school attended services at a nearby Lutheran church. In high school, he decided he wanted to be "a rock star." A friend of his and he started a band. Russ figures they were in maybe 50 bands, and in the 1970s he made his living playing for bands at bars in Edmonton. Russ told me: "The reason that I originally got a band together is because my uncle gave me an old reel-to-reel tape recorder, and I wanted to use it."

This interest led into into sound engineering at the end of the 1970s. His studio was where k.d. lang first recorded her music. However, he never made any money in the studio business. He subsequently got married and needed more substantial income, so he started his own company installing speakers for local restaurants and buildings, which is his current occupation. He connected with River West because he was looking for something "relevant" to his life.

> The first time that I attended River West they were meeting at

> a school gymnasium, and there were a couple of people playing guitars, and a couple of singers, and I thought, well this is different...The church that I was brought up in as a kid was one of these big stone Gothic buildings...It was apart from the community, you had that feeling, you walk through the doors and this is different.

After awhile, he asked the worship team leader if she needed someone to play bass for her team. She responded that they'd just been praying for a bassist. He played bass on the team, and then when someone left the sound engineer role, he assumed that role.

Many of the performers on the worship team, and worship leaders themselves, are young persons active in the wider evangelical popular-music scene. One described his group as a "slack-rock" band, a particular category of independent college-rock music; his group was just starting and had played at an inter-Mennonite coffee house. Another member of the worship teams at River West was a member of a Christian ska band; this band is more established, having recorded a CD. This ska band has played at some very large evangelical events in Edmonton, including playing at the massive YC Christian youth festival on April 6-7, 2001.

Both the personal stories and the community activities of music team members at River West underline the openness of the church to "the culture": these musicians have come from diverse place and backgrounds, and are active in many parts of the Edmonton music scene beyond the church.

### 5.6.3 Private Use of Christian Music

Many participants saw Christian popular music as important to their daily life. Virtually all interviewees suggested that there was a strong overlap between their taste in church music and their private listening habits—that is, both spheres contained Christian contemporary music. These CD's are purchased through local Christian bookstores, via mail-order companies, and through local conferences and other worship gatherings. These places become important in themselves as a social and musical arena for the Christian music fan.

Private use of CD's, however, might be considered generational. For example, one older member of the church whom I interviewed expressed a good deal of appreciation for the chorus repertoire, but lamented that it was not available in printed form for use throughout the week. When I commented that some church members might use tapes or CD's similarly, he responded: "Well, we were accustomed to having these things in print. That made all the difference. Continuous access, the kids could look at it anytime they want to."

### 5.6.4 Look Where we are in Time: the Value of Musical Style

River West's musical traditions have changed over time; in 1987 when River West began meeting, its musical repertoire was more like its parent church, Lendrum Mennonite Brethren—that is, hymns and classical music. The move to popular music was a conscious choice, remembered by one congregational member as follows:

> I remember the days before the guitar. I think that the music has become increasingly contemporary, moving completely away from the Green *Hymnal* and *Sing Alleluia* and the rounds and the four part harmonies and the days of "Wonderful the matchless grace of Jesus, Greater than the mighty rolling sea (the rolling sea)." I can still see and hear people singing that song in my mind. We've moved from fear of instruments to openness towards them, from the love of hymns to semi-disregard. Maybe the best way to describe the change would be to say that we have "modernized" and caught up with the status quo.[6]

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[6] Cliff, a church leader, commented on the familiarity of Christian popular music to many evangelicals: "I think for my age and younger, who've grown up in churches, we've grown

Most interviewees cited the lyrics of Christian popular music as their key value: in general, they were felt to be "inspirational" or "uplifting" to the worshipper. Jim, who identified himself as primarily a fan of secular popular music, noted that some Christians think Christian contemporary music sounds too secular, but, he said, "look at where we are in time!" For Jim, the sound of the music is contemporary, and the lyrics carry a Christian message. The pattern of explaining this value of Christian contemporary music was common to nearly all interviewees: first the contemporary sound is discussed, and second, the lyrics are discussed.

As a correlate to "where we are in time," let me note that youth are extremely important to the style of music performed at River West. It is the perceived desires of youth who are seen as the future of the church, which drive musical performance at River West on the level of congregational leadership, and furthermore youth who are worship leaders and members of the worship teams are the primary performers of music at River West. In some cases, this means that older performers at River West are more marginal to music at River West than younger performers; for example, one middle-aged singer in the congregation was asked primarily to do "special music," referring to occasional solo singing during a service. While this singer was quite skilled and willing to do more performance, the primary performance spot, that of the worship leader, is taken primarily by young adult, twenty to thirty year old members.

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up in churches with contemporary Christian music. That's normal for us. I remember even a year or two ago, leading and doing a practice with some of the younger singers, and we were going to do a hymn, and they said 'oh, this is a new song. I've never heard this song before.' And I'm going, what's going on here? Oh, we have to learn this new song here, a song that's been in the church for decades if not for centuries. And they've never heard it before!" Cliff's comment underlines the idea, mentioned earlier, that many evangelicals are developing ethnic-like, in-group practices.

### 5.6.5 The Relationship of Media and Church Performances

The music which is performed at River West on any given Sunday is distributed in two forms: audio-recordings (primarily CD's, of course) and charts, which give the texts and chords for a song. River West musicians will frequently own or have access to the CD's of the music which they perform. The CD's form a sort of macro-level text for this music: they are available all over North America, and constitute a "standard" performance of this music. This raised the question for me as a fieldworker: do most aspects of the musical performance, including such variable details as instrumentation, ornamentation, and vocal tone, originate with a CD recording? Or does the performance of the music at River West represent "versioning," so that a core of the text originates with the CD recording, but significant variable details are determined by the musicians at River West? The following fieldnote discusses this in the context of a worship service.

*Fieldnotes 4/22/01*

*At this point in the rehearsal, they were "ironing out" ensemble and performative issues. It was particularly interesting to me that the compact disc from which some of this music was taken was an important referent for this rehearsal. For example, at one point Susan stopped John's drum playing, and said "We need a more 'Step by Step' feeling, like on the CD." John said he'd listened to this CD and was trying to duplicate it. Later a similar issue occurred for a local tradition, that is, a drum pattern which used to be played by a drummer who was part of the group before John. This drummer could not be found to demonstrate her pattern, and everyone else in the group lacked the technique to demonstrate or the vocabulary explain this fill. Eventually, a compromise was reached where John just played "his own thing."*

This is an interesting glimpse into how performance traditions are formed in ways that are simultaneously non-local and commodified—as in the reference to the CD—and also local and taught from person to person, as in the local

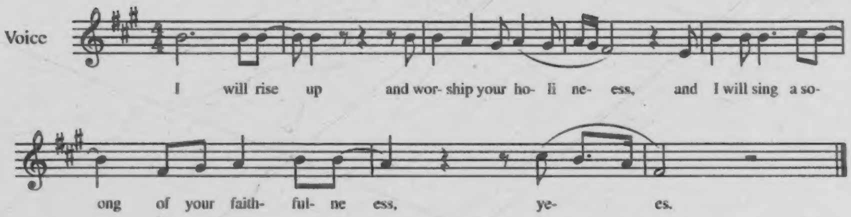

Voice
I will rise up and wor- ship your ho- li ne- ess, and I will sing a so-
ong of your faith- ful- ne ess, ye- es.

Figure 5.7: Transcription from "I Will Rise Up," by Michael Ash (including ornament)

tradition of the drum pattern. Interestingly, these two kinds of traditions are framed in the same way in the rehearsal: "I've heard it elsewhere this way [live or on a CD]...can you perform it like that?"

After observing this rehearsal, I took special note of ornaments and other variable details of the performance of particular pieces of music at River West. In particular, I noted that, during the song "I Will Rise Up," by Michael Ash (©Maranatha Music 1999), one worship leader always sang a vocal exclamation of "Yes!" which was not printed on the Powerpoint-projected or overhead-projected lyric sheet from which the congregation sang. Figure 5.7 shows a transcription of the segment of the song which includes this ornament.

When this song was performed on a Sunday when this particular worship leader was out of town, I was surprised to note that this "Yes!" was still sung. I asked an interviewee who worked together musically with this worship leader about this particular ornament:

> I think that when [the songleader] does that, it's just him doing it. When [he] does it once, then he always does it...I think they're just kind of [him]-isms...

*CD Audio Example 5.1: River West Christian Church*

I researched this particular ornament by obtaining copies of several performances of the song, on CD and in MP3 form. The song originated as a pop song by the Christian popular music group Thirsty Child, who released an

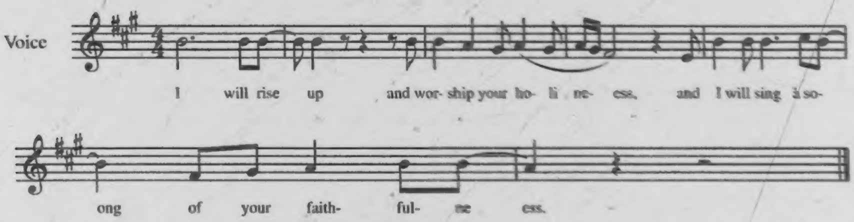

Voice
I will rise up and wor- ship your ho- li ne- ess, and I will sing a so-
ong of your faith- ful- ne ess.

Figure 5.8: Transcription from "I Will Rise Up," by Michael Ash (without ornament)

early version of it in 1998 which does not include this variable detail. Figure 5.8 shows a transcription of the segment of the song as it appears in Thirsty Child's recording.

*CD Audio Example 5.2: Thirsty Child*

The group has a collection of church and other performances of the song on their web-site. While most of the church performances do not include this "Yes!," several do, including a performance of the song by Calvary Chapel, of Old Bridge New Jersey.

*CD Audio Example 5.3: Calvary Chapel*

In fact, the overhead used by this church includes the ornament as an "official" exclamation in its printed song lyrics, which the overhead used by River West omits. The song was re-recorded by Maranatha Music's Praise Band on their 1999 CD *Praise Band 9 / Forever*. This widely distributed version of the song does not include the exclamation in the first chorus, but in the second it is included just as sung by the community churches.

*CD Audio Example 5.4: Maranatha Praise Band*

My surmise was that the ornament originated on the Praise Band 9 CD, and contact with Mike Ash, the song-writer, confirmed that this is indeed where the ornament first appears. Since it is variable on that recording, it is variably duplicated in performances of the song in different churches. In other words, it is only in a limited sense a unique "version" of the song which is sung at River West, in which certain variable performance details of an already-existing recorded version are followed.

The idea of "versioning" nonetheless describes the performance of many songs song on Sunday morning at River West, since ornaments originating with worship band members are *also* remembered and duplicated in subsequent performances, as the example of the drum fill given in the fieldnote above demonstrates. That is, though musical choices are conditioned by mass-mediated texts, at times we hear a distinctly local version of a multi-local or even global text, which may be determined by highly contingent local understandings and events.

## 5.7 Conclusions

Let me return to the questions which I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. The chapter has explored the social structures by which popular music works in this church – the church institutions of the worship team and the worship leader being the key social roles. Understandings of the value of this music are tied in on the one hand to a desire to connect with and be open to persons of "the culture," that is, North American culture, and are described in terms of the contemporary sound of the music, and on the other hand to the enablement of worship for every individual in the church on Sunday, the event which defines the group as a church.

The relationship between the media groups which produce and distribute Christian popular music and the local performances of this music on the one hand, and secular popular music on the other, is worthy of comment. At both levels, music which deliberately engages with the sound of popular music, but which departs from its lyrical content, is produced – that is, I agree with Lawrence Grossberg's assessment of popular conservatism, in this case in the form of evangelical Christian popular music. Evangelicals engage with culture, but transform it in ways which create novel forms of popular culture. At the same time, Mark Shibley is correct that they are themselves transformed, as River West's musical style changed from hymns and classical music to Christian popular music.

However, I would argue that the historical consciousness found among participants of different forms of Christian popular music at River West shows that musical change is a constant rather than an occasional or exceptional feature of church musical practice. That is, rather than Christian popular music being understood as a totally exceptional move to accommodate the culture, Christian musical practice should be understood as a history of relationships to broader cultural trends and expressive practices.

The relationship between the performances on CD's and local performances of Christian popular music indexes a complicated relationship between media group and audience. The example of the web page, on which versions of the song "I will Rise Up" are performed at different churches, indicates keen attention to the local performances of songs by at least the songwriter who produced the song. These media groups clearly do not simply produce music which is then consumed; rather, they are in some cases sensitive to the "pulse" of what their audience wants and creates, through responses to and in the case of Christian contemporary worship music, performances of this music. In addition, the composition of local songs and their placement on the same "level," for local performers and congregational singers, as that of more broadly distributed, mediated products such as "I Will Rise Up," is a significant difference from the place of most such mediated songs in their performances by secular local performers. Local church performers have a good deal of power to create a local popular music tradition within their church.

# Chapter 6

# Holyrood Mennonite Church

## 6.1 Introduction

### 6.1.1 An Ave Maria at Holyrood

*Thursday, February 3, 2000. 7pm.*

*I sing in a men's quartet at Holyrood. We perform every few weeks at church as "special music." We have performed music in gospel quartet style, classical pieces, and hymns from the blue Mennonite hymnal. This group is not professional, nor the most polished group I've sung with—and yet all of us have expressed at one time or another what meaningful worship it is to sing in this particular group, and what a wonderful musical experience it is.*

*This week it was my job to pick the music for the quartet. This week we have a guest coming in to play piano for us. It's been a busy week, so I picked the first piece which seemed both accessible for a quick study but difficult enough to have an impressive piano part: Fauré's "Ave Maria." Unfortunately, I remember that among Mennonites in Southern Manitoba where I grew up, Catholic church music, especially in Latin, was suspect—the lay theological argument going that such music expressed a prayer to Mary, not God, which was concealed by singing in Latin. So, I think up a theological explanation showing the appropriateness of this music to our worship at Holyrood, sightread the parts so that I can sing them in order to teach them, and run downstairs to meet Jim, who gives me a ride to church.*

*Stephen arrives, we all say hello and begin rehearsal. We start with the Fauré, since Jim and I think it will take more time. Stephen immediately asks if we can sing an Ave Maria in a Mennonite church, and I respond with my theological explanation. Stephen suggests that I should also relay this to the congregation.*

*We go through the parts one by one, singing them in unison with the piano, on which Kelly plays our unison lines. This is how we've learned other classical music before—it seems to work most easily if we sing our lines together at first. Kelly then begins to play her piano part and we listen appreciatively—she repeats small parts and fixes notes, and is done. We repeat the piece several times, until we are more grounded in the notes.*

*Jim gives us the photocopies he's made of the song "I want my life to tell for Jesus," from a male quartet book from 1911, which was his dad's. This one we sing in harmony right away, and then work on on several dynamic and rhythmic aspects of the song.*

*We head back to "Ave Maria," singing through it in harmony with the piano part. It seems to come together much better. Our voices are all tired and a little discouraged by the difficulty of the "Ave Maria."*

*Sunday, February 5. Holyrood Mennonite Church, Church Service, 10:20 am.*

*After the offertory, it's time for the Men's Group to sing. We begin with "Ave Maria." We walk to the front and stand in a semicircle. I give my short explanation, and everyone listens. Then Kelly plays the first chord, and we breathe together. The singing goes very well—Stephen is solid, and it is always a joy to sing with Jim, who has a natural fluidity to his voice that makes our tenor lines resonate roundly. We finish, and we are very pleased.*

*Later in the service, during the "Share and Prayer," an older man, who asked us to sing the gospel hymn we sing today, gets up and says how much he is looking forward to this song. So, the Men's Group gets up for the Gospel sing. After the request, we are all excited about singing this well. We sing with* *a lot of emotion, and it comes off quite nicely, I think.*

*After the service, I talk briefly with our requester: he remembers that his father used to sing this song, and that he used to sing it too, in a men's choir. I thank him for telling me. On my way out of church, an older woman stops me and tells me that today was not the first time she heard "Ave Maria" in a Mennonite church—she heard it at her brother's wedding. Her brother married a Catholic, and they didn't consider them to be married unless you sang Ave Maria, she says. She loved the song.*

### 6.1.2 Ethnic Identity and Religious Identity

As I have suggested, Mennonite studies has often seen Mennonites either as an ethnic group, or as a religious group. An ethnic group can be understood to be relatively closed to outsiders and united in its understandings of culture as practiced within the group. On the other hand, a religious group, as it is often understood in Mennonite studies, is relatively open to outsiders but is thought to have transcended any single ethnic culture which may have related to it, so that it now understands cultural practice in the light of the Gospel, seen as *transcultural*.

While these are simplifications of the understandings of ethnic and religious groups in the Mennonite studies literature, they do serve to illustrate a difficulty with theorizing the identity of a multi-ethnic church in which one or several ethnicities figure prominently. The theoretical relationship between the ethnic group and religious group deserves reflection. Classic ethnic studies scholars have classified religious groups as another form of ethnic group, which maintains boundaries in a manner similar to ethnic groups with "national" origins, but which believes its own origin to be theological rather than national (Barth, 1996; Gans, 1996). This kind of thinking derives from anthropological studies of local communities in the non-West, which were seen as relatively insular, between the times of Malinowski and Clifford Geertz, and the of ethnic communities in the West, also seen in terms of the ethnic enclave, discussed in sociological and more recent anthropological work.

Recently, however, the insularity and ethnic singularity of any particular social group has come to be questioned; social theorists such as Scott Lash and John Urry have highlighted the extent to which identities are mobile and global rather than static and local (Lash, 1994). Anthropological and ethnomusicological work, such as that of Mirjana Lausevic, Peter Manuel, and George Marcus, has both corroborated this theory with ethnographic data and theorized the application of this general social theory to anthropological and ethnomusicological studies in particular (Lausevic, 1996; Manuel, 1997-1998; Marcus, 1998).

Though they are valuable, these studies fall short of accounting for the persistence of ethnicity and its relevance within present-day groups, who are implicated in and influenced by such global flows of identities, where members understand multiple ethnicities and other registers of identity to be pertinent, such as religious groups. How does ethnicity continue to matter in such groups? Conversely, how does such a group maintain its religious identity without destroying other internal identities within the group, such as ethnic affiliations? These questions underlie the ethnographic narrative of this chapter, which focusses on the relationship between musical practices and subgroups of Holyrood Mennonite Church.

## 6.2 The Where: Holyrood Mennonite Church

Holyrood Mennonite Church is just south of the river which divides the city down its centre, southeast of the downtown core. While the church is situated on the corner of 95th Avenue and 79th Street, a mostly working-class residential neighborhood, Holyrood's membership comes from all over the city, but the church is a significant enough centre for the congregation that many of its members intentionally live near it.

Inside, Holyrood is a modified example of the simple A-frame church archi-

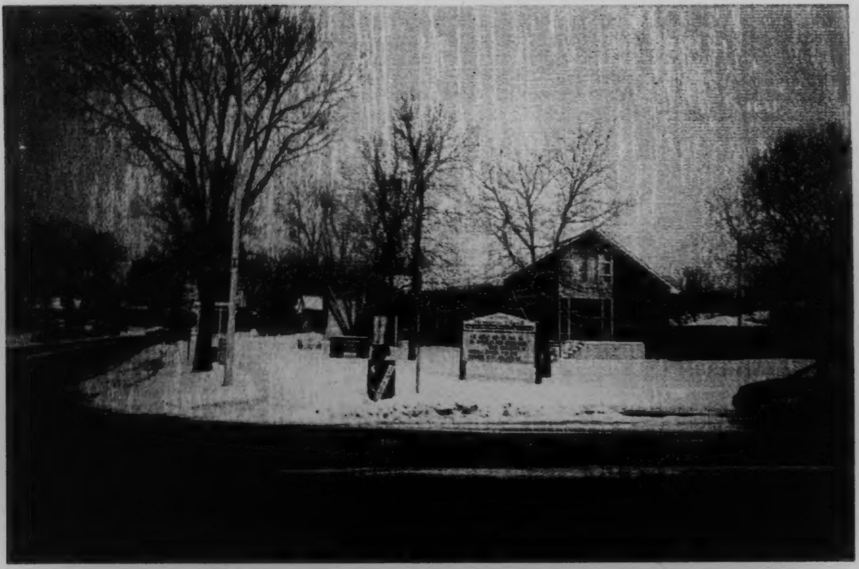


Figure 6.1: Photograph of Holyrood Mennonite Church Streetcorner

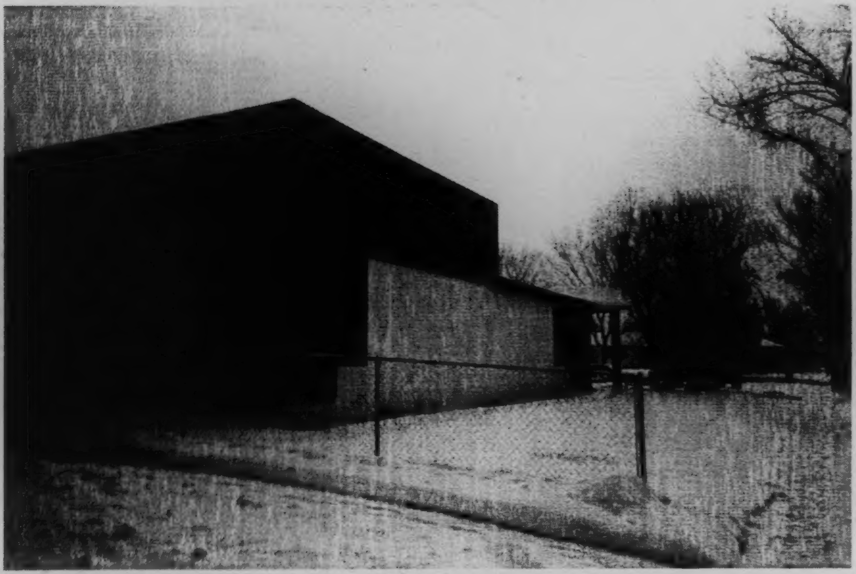
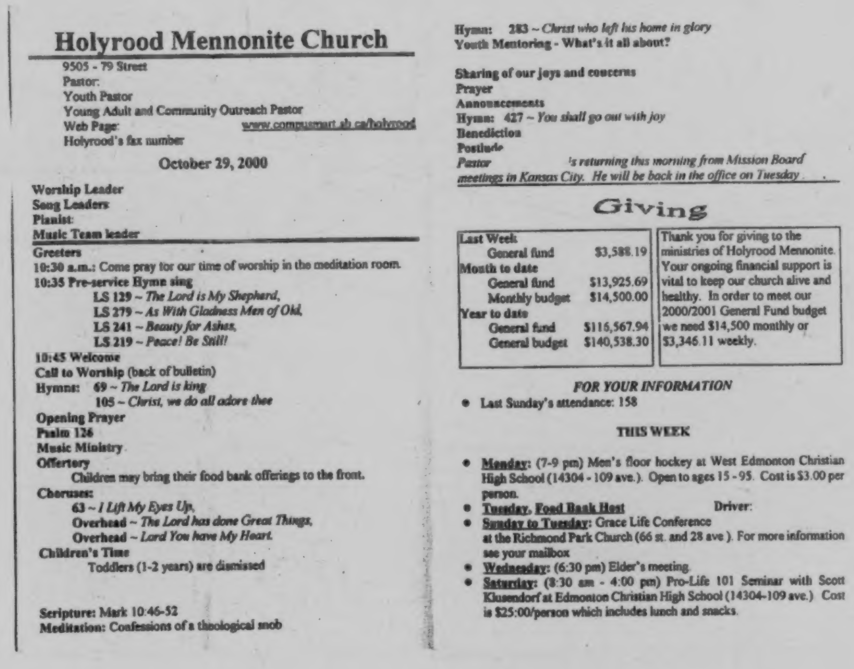


Figure 6.2: Photograph of Holyrood Mennonite Church

Figure 6.3: Photograph of Holyrood Mennonite Church Gathering in Foyer

tecture which characterized many Mennonite churches built in the middle of the 20th century. A foyer at the entry is the gathering place for church members prior to the service. Holyrood's shell-shaped sanctuary encloses some of the original A-frame, so that a few of the beams of the A-frame are still visible. Traditional church pews fill the room, with its point connecting at the front of the church, where the pulpit is backed by a sculpture that is simultaneously the dove of peace and the fire of the Holy Spirit.

The duality of this symbol is embodied in the mix of ethnicities and musical styles which are part of Holyrood Mennonite Church. The church's membership currently stands at about 200. The congregation began as an urban Swiss Mennonite fellowship, and in the mid-1990s gained an influx of Russian Mennonites who had been part of a previously active General Conference Mennonite Church. The church also has a history of ethnic open-ness and a friendly community presence, evidenced by the one-third of its membership who are not "ethnic" Mennonites, but rather Mennonite by choice, includ-



## Holyrood Mennonite Church

9505 - 79 Street
Pastor:
Youth Pastor
Young Adult and Community Outreach Pastor
Web Page: www.compusmart.ab.ca/holyrood
Holyrood's fax number

October 29, 2000

**Worship Leader**
**Song Leaders**
**Pianist:**
**Music Team leader**

**Greeters**
**10:30 a.m.:** Come pray for our time of worship in the meditation room.
**10:35 Pre-service Hymn sing**
**LS 129** ~ *The Lord is My Shepherd,*
**LS 279** ~ *As With Gladness Men of Old,*
**LS 241** ~ *Beauty for Ashes,*
**LS 219** ~ *Peace! Be Still!*
**10:45 Welcome**
**Call to Worship** (back of bulletin)
**Hymns:** **69** ~ *The Lord is king*
**105** ~ *Christ, we do all adore thee*
**Opening Prayer**
**Psalm 126**
**Music Ministry**
**Offertory**
Children may bring their food bank offerings to the front.
**Choruses:**
**63** ~ *I Lift My Eyes Up,*
**Overhead** ~ *The Lord has done Great Things,*
**Overhead** ~ *Lord You have My Heart.*
**Children's Time**
Toddlers (1-2 years) are dismissed

**Scripture:** Mark 10:46-52
**Meditation:** Confessions of a theological snob

**Hymn:** **283** ~ *Christ who left his home in glory*
**Youth Mentoring - What's it all about?**

**Sharing of our joys and concerns**
**Prayer**
**Announcements**
**Hymn:** **427** ~ *You shall go out with joy*
**Benediction**
**Postlude**
*Pastor 's returning this morning from Mission Board meetings in Kansas City. He will be back in the office on Tuesday .*

### Giving

| | |
|---|---|
| **Last Week** | |
| General fund | $3,588.19 |
| **Month to date** | |
| General fund | $13,925.69 |
| Monthly budget | $14,500.00 |
| **Year to date** | |
| General fund | $116,567.94 |
| General budget | $140,538.30 |

Thank you for giving to the ministries of Holyrood Mennonite. Your ongoing financial support is vital to keep our church alive and healthy. In order to meet our 2000/2001 General Fund budget we need $14,500 monthly or $3,346.11 weekly.

***FOR YOUR INFORMATION***

- Last Sunday's attendance: 158

**THIS WEEK**

- **Monday:** (7-9 pm) Men's floor hockey at West Edmonton Christian High School (14304 - 109 ave.). Open to ages 15 - 95. Cost is $3.00 per person.
- **Tuesday, Food Bank Host** Driver:
- **Sunday to Tuesday:** Grace Life Conference at the Richmond Park Church (66 st. and 28 ave ). For more information see your mailbox
- **Wednesday:** (6:30 pm) Elder's meeting.
- **Saturday:** (8:30 am - 4:00 pm) Pro-Life 101 Seminar with Scott Klusendorf at Edmonton Christian High School (14304-109 ave.) Cost is $25:00/person which includes lunch and snacks.

Figure 6.4: Photograph of Holyrood Mennonite Church Bulletin

ing at the time of research a sizable group of French-speaking Africans. The church is self-consciously diverse, and many members see that diversity as both significant and positive.

Music is an important part of Holyrood's congregational life, and a complex area in which relationships between and the needs of diverse parts of the congregation are expressed and met. On any particularly Sunday, the congregation may sing hymns from a Mennonite hymnal, choruses accompanied by an acoustic folk pop ensemble, and gospel hymnody. The basic pattern of music and worship at Holyrood proceeds in the following order: chorus singing preceding and opening the service, opening prayers, "gathering hymns," followed by "praise hymns," a sermon and a hymn of response, a time of congregational sharing, and finally a hymn of "sending." This pattern corresponds to the "blended" service type which I described in chapter two.

Holyrood's interest in Mennonite organizations and conference structures is strong. At the time of research Holyrood was part of the Northwest Mennonite Conference, which was a provisional member of Mennonite Church Canada.[1] While Holyrood does not have a close relationship with Mennonite educational institutions, Holyrood does have strong connections with local inter-Mennonite service projects in Edmonton. These include members who, at the time of my research, were workers and leaders at the Welcome Home Community and the Mennonite Centre for Newcomers. This direction towards local, urban service with other Mennonite groups and organizations is strongly valued by many members of the congregation.

In sum, Holyrood Mennonite Church is both diverse in terms of ethnicity and musical style, and at the same time is particularly strongly connected with other Mennonite groups.

## 6.3 My Relationship with Holyrood Mennonite Church

My relationship with Holyrood Mennonite Church was exceptionally close, for a fieldworker-field relationship. Upon moving to Edmonton for graduate school, I connected with Holyrood Mennonite Church through a friend whom I knew from college. I was befriended by many people at Holyrood, and became involved in the church as a music leader and solo singer.

It was only after a year and a half of attending Holyrood that the idea of pursuing fieldwork there occurred to me. I submitted a formal proposal to the church at a congregational meeting, at which the members of the church voted to allow me to pursue fieldwork at Holyrood. My fieldwork relationship with the church was open, and my participation as a music leader and singer continued.

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[1] In 2003, the Northwest Mennonite Conference voted to opt out of membership in Mennonite Church Canada, likely due to the Conference's relatively conservative position on debates within Mennonite Church Canada concerning the admittance of homosexual members to Mennonite churches. Holyrood subsequently joined Mennonite Church Canada through the Alberta Conference of Mennonites.

The following fieldnote excerpt discusses my first "official" day of fieldwork at Holyrood, introducing the tone of my fieldwork at Holyrood—participating as a congregational member first and fieldworker second.

*Fieldnotes, Holyrood Mennonite Church, Jan. 30, 2000*

*I sit with Henri, a college friend, and recent room-mate of mine. I often sit with Henri if possible, since he's such a close and longtime friend. The preservice hymn sing has already begun, so Henri and I sing along with the rollicking gospel hymn.*

*Henri knows that I am studying Holyrood, so when I pull out the pen and begin to take notes on my bulletin, he says in my ear, "You're studying us!"—"Yep," I say—so HE pulls out a pen and starts taking notes too, presumably on my behavior.*

At the same time, since Holyrood Mennonite Church was my home church, I felt most strongly a difference between being a member of the group and being a researcher of the group at Holyrood. As Chou Chiener (2002) has observed, there is a difference in these roles even when both are fulfilled by one individual; when I became a fieldworker, some congregational members began to share ideas concerning music with me, without any elicitation on my part. Others inquired as to how the research was going, and what my observations were up to this point, and offered evaluations of my thoughts in progress.

Everyone remained very friendly to me and Holyrood continued to be my church community; nonetheless, as the fieldnote above implies, there was a consciousness of my new role as a fieldworker which had implications for the interactions which congregational members had with me.

It is also possible that my continuing participation in the church as a musician may have affected responses to my interview questions – for example, because I was a hymn leader at Holyrood, it may be that interviewees were more reticent to offer strongly critical views of hymns. This is not possible to verify, but I offer it for the reader's consideration.

## 6.4 Two Musical Worlds, One Performance

There are two musical worlds which operate in the context of the blended service at Holyrood Mennonite Church: the world of hymns and the world of choruses. This genre distinction is important enough that one interviewee described is as a "solid wall between the choruses on the one hand and the hymns on the other." That is, in the performance of this music on Sunday morning services, most Holyrood participants understand the choruses to be one event and the hymns to be another. Both are music in worship of God, but they are distinct events within the blended service.

Genre, in the sense in which I use the term in this study, includes the practitioners and performance contexts of a style of music as well as the formal features of this music. This term aptly describes the two musical worlds which contribute to the one performance on Sunday morning at Holyrood: though there is some overlap between the worlds of hymns and choruses at Holyrood, different persons perform different roles with a different sequence of important events to lead up to the worship service. In order to reflect this, I will discuss the two collections of participants and their functions leading up to the worship service separately: first the hymns and the the choruses.

## 6.5 The Who: Key Roles in Singing Hymns at Holyrood

For hymns, the network of performers and decision-makers which is pertinent at Holyrood includes: song leaders, the pastor or preacher, the accompanist (pianist), and of course congregational singers. Table 6.1 summarizes these key roles and the key processes in hymns at Holyrood.

The songleaders at Holyrood are usually invited to become songleaders by either the pastor or music committee member. The songleaders at the time of

| Role Number | Role | Gender and Age | Processes |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | song leader | male or female, young adult to middle-aged | 1, 2, 3 |
| 2 | pastor or preacher | male, middle aged | 1, 4 |
| 3 | accompanist | female, young adult | 2, 3 |
| 4 | congregational member | n.a. | 4 |

| Process Number | Process | Participants |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | repertoire gathering | 1, 2 |
| 2 | plan performance of hymns | 1, 3 |
| 3 | Sunday worship and performance | 1, 3, 4 |
| 4 | feedback | 2, 4 |
| 5 | loop | |

Repertoire Source: Hymnal

Table 6.1: Roles and Processes in Hymns at Holyrood Mennonite Church

research were white, college-aged or middle-aged, with a college educational background. Some, but not all songleaders, had formal musical and liturgical training at the undergraduate and graduate levels. All songleaders had strong singing voices and an extensive personal and experiential knowledge of the hymns often sung in Mennonite churches. During the time of research, there were four songleaders (two women and two men) whose turns rotated from Sunday to Sunday. This schedule was determined by the music co-ordinator, a church committee member. Most songleaders were involved only in leading hymns, but not in leading choruses.

The accompanists, who are almost always pianists at Holyrood, are usually invited to accompany at Holyrood by the music committee member. During the time of research, there were two regular accompanists and one accompanist who would play on relatively rare occasions. All of these accompanists were female, and the regular accompanists were young college-aged women. The accompanists did not have extensive background in formal, classical music education, but both accompanists could play well by ear and enjoyed singing. Unlike the songleader, the accompanist would often play for both the choruses

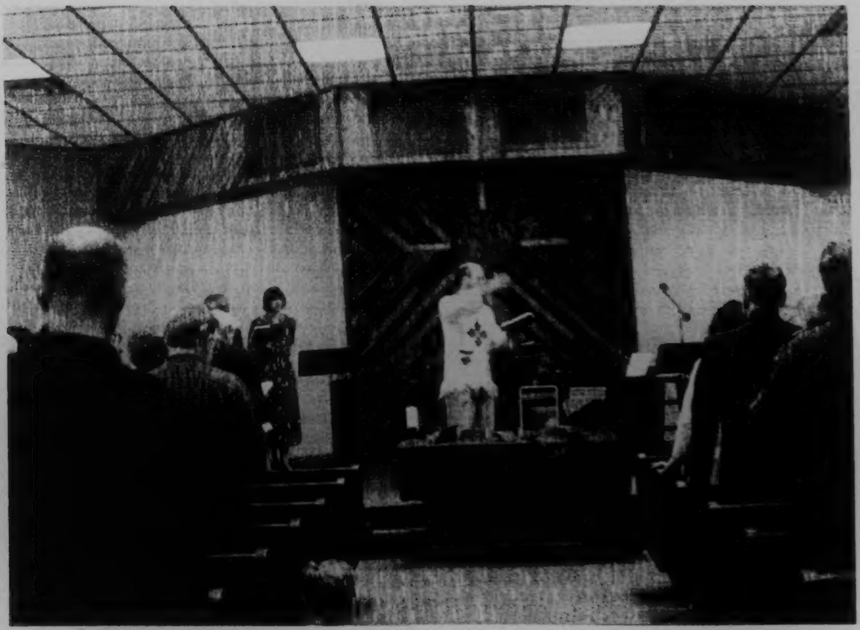

Figure 6.5: Photograph of Holyrood Mennonite Church Hymn Singing

and the hymns.

## 6.6 The What: Key Processes in Singing Hymns at Holyrood

### 6.6.1 Repertoire Selection

The songleader at Holyrood chooses the hymns to be sung on Sunday morning. Songleaders choose hymns which satisfy the functional categories of a traditional worship service, as outlined on an order or service received from the pastor: hymns of gathering, praise, response, and sending. This order of service will also include the theme of worship for the Sunday, a reference to the scriptures which are to be read on Sunday, and frequently the title of the sermon. Hymns are almost always chosen from the blue *Hymnal* (Slough, 1992), which the church uses. Sometimes, though less frequently, hymns are chosen from the *Lifesongs* (Brunk & Coffman, 1974 (orig. 1916)), a book of gospel hymns especially familiar to older members of Holyrood.

Characteristics of hymns which songleaders suggested were important included: familiarity to the leader and the congregation, the appealing nature of the music of the hymn, and the relevance of the text of the hymn to the theme, scriptures or sermon. Songleaders described several different processes of picking hymns. Almost all songleaders read the scriptures first. Following this, some songleaders picked music they liked which they felt related well to the scriptures. Other songleaders used the indices in the *Hymnal* to select music, particularly those indices relating hymns to particular themes or Scriptures. One songleader used other resources, including worship resource books published by other Protestant groups, with more extensive and detailed cross-referencing of scriptures, themes, and hymns.

The pastor participates in this selection process as well, in that the pastor and worship leader work together to select a theme for the service and also select scriptures – usually from the lectionary, an ecumenical resource which suggests readings for each Sunday and moves through the entire Scriptures over several years time. The songleader and pastor contact each other and discuss the theme and scriptures of the service, and the pastor responds to the hymn selections which the songleader has made, sometimes offering suggestions for change.

These suggestions may be pragmatic, such as suggesting a more familiar hymn in place of a less familiar hymn. Or, the pastor may suggest an alternate hymn which has a text strongly related to the scriptures, theme, or sermon. The pastor may also pass on comments which he has received from congregational members concerning hymn selections on other Sundays, thus influencing the selections made by the songleader. Typically, the pastor also picks the hymn of response, to which the songleader can respond with acceptance or further conversation.

### 6.6.2 Planning the Hymns: Tempi, Dynamics, Verse Selection

The songleader then calls the accompanist, to plan how the hymns will in fact be performed during the church service. In some cases, the songleader simply tells the accompanist which hymns, and which verses of these hymns, are to be performed. In others, the songleader discusses with the accompanist what tempo and dynamics should be used for a certain hymn, et cetera.

The songleader is the major decision maker in this exchange; the accompanist does not decide on which hymns are to be played or how they are to be played. However, when the actual performance time comes about, the accompanist plays a very significant role, perhaps restoring a balance of power between songleader and accompanist. Many congregational members do not look up at the conductor, as they are reading music or lyrics; thus, they follow the accompanist's sound. The pianist also often introduces hymns with a short "tag" for which she typically sets a tempo, and with which she can set a dynamic framework for the piece as well.

### 6.6.3 Congregational Members, Feedback and Hymns

During singing on Sunday morning, which will be described in detail subsequently, congregational members are the primary performers of hymns. They follow the lead of the songleader and accompanist, but congregational members also have an effect on the songleader and accompanist during their performance. By responding wholeheartedly or less wholeheartedly, by becoming visibly physically engaged in the music or not, the members of the congregation communicate their musical feelings to the songleader and accompanist.

For example, when I asked one songleader if they noticed when there was a low level of engagement and sound in the congregation when songleading, they responded that they did notice this and that it affected their songleading:

> Instead of saying something. . . I would probably try and model

> what I wanted more myself. Maybe get the pianist to pick it up a little, try to make eye contact more, direct, or pointedly kind of sing, wave my arms, a bit more. If I wanted it a little louder, I probably wouldn't stop everything, and say, OK, now let's take the next verse a little louder, you know...

Similarly, other songleaders felt that when the congregation was singing confidently and strongly, that this inspired them to be more expressive in their leading or to feel more worshipful. Accompanists described their own performance process, also showing fine sensitivity to the sound of the congregation and the songleader. One accompanist described in detail her careful process of listening to the congregation as she played, and bringing out aspects of the text which she particularly valued by playing them and listening for a congregational response. The congregation's performance, the songleader's performance, and the accompanist's performance, in other words, respond to each other and in practice are constantly negotiated between these three "performers."

Outside of the performance occasion itself, congregational members offer feedback through informal conversations with the songleader or accompanist, or formal comments made to the music co-ordinator or pastor. Positive comments are most frequently made to the songleader themselves informally. Negative feedback, on the other hand, is often offered in a formal comment to the music co-ordinator or pastor, who responds to the congregation member and who may or may not pass this comment on to the songleader. Both the music co-ordinator and pastor expressed their desire to affirm the work of the songleaders, rather than to criticize their work.

| Role Number | Role | Gender and Age | Processes |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | worship team leader | male or female, young adult to middle-aged | 1, 2, 3 |
| 2 | worship team member | male or female, youth to middle-aged | 2, 3, 4 |
| 3 | congregational member | n.a. | 3, 4 |

| Process Number | Process | Participants |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | repertoire gathering | 1, 2 |
| 2 | weekly rehearsal | 1, 2 |
| 3 | Sunday worship and performance | 1, 2, 3 |
| 4 | feedback | 2, 3 |
| 5 | loop | |

Repertoire Source: Holyrood Chorus Book and team members repertoires

Table 6.2: Roles and Processes in Choruses at Holyrood Mennonite Church

## 6.7 The Who: Key Roles in Singing Choruses at Holyrood

For choruses, the network of performers and decision-makers includes: the worship team leaders, worship team members, and congregational members. Table 6.2 summarizes the roles and processes important to chorus-singing at Holyrood.

Worship team leaders at Holyrood are primarily middle-aged. At the time of research, there were two women and one man who were worship team leaders. Each had their own team which they lead and with whom they practice regularly. Worship teams were also on a rotation scheduled by the music coordinator. Most worship team leaders were capable singers, who could also play guitar with varying degrees of facility. All worship team leaders were interested in, and had significant personal experience with, Christian popular music in general and choruses in particular.

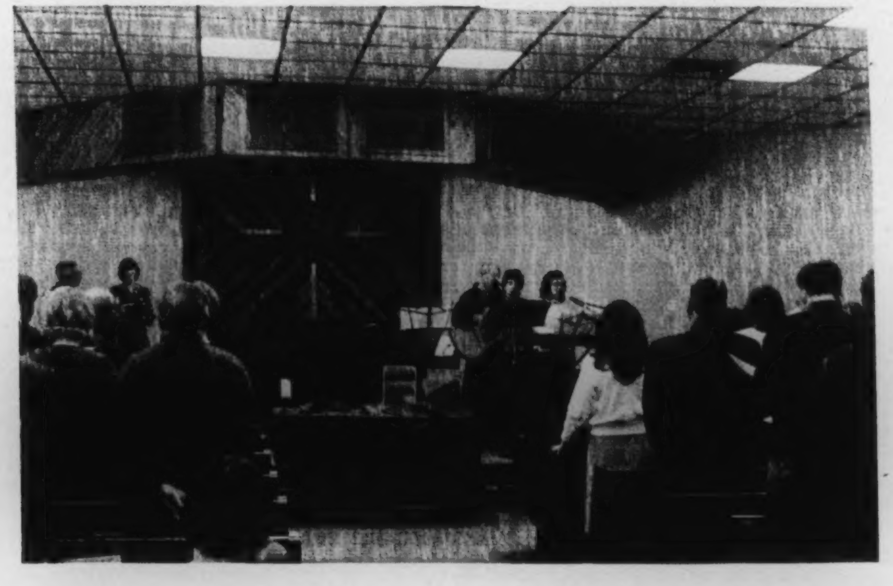

Figure 6.6: Photograph of Holyrood Mennonite Church Chorus Singing

Worship team members on the other hand are mostly youth and college-aged, with both men and women represented. There are several players on each team: a pianist, a guitarist, backup singers, and sometimes a drummer. Worship team members at the time of research included both North American and African members. The background in popular-music training among chorus members varied widely, from very little training to the equivalent of a professional musician's training. As I noted above, the pianist often played both for the choruses and the hymns.

## 6.8 The What: Key Processes in Singing Choruses at Holyrood

### 6.8.1 Repertoire Gathering

Worship leaders choose the repertoire to be performed by their worship team, most often from the Holyrood chorus book. This book was compiled through a process local to Holyrood; here is a summary of that process, as a congregational leader told it to me:

> ...that was a sort of team of people that was put together to put together the chorus book...they met with all the different chorus groups, who led singing...because different chorus groups have sort of their songs that they do more often and are more familiar with...they brought these different songs to each other, and they try to teach each other different songs...those three different groups, or four different chorus groups, however many there were, they had the majority of say in what got in there, because they're the ones leading the songs. So they just suggested the songs that they sing, so we'd get a variety in there...then they got their list and typed them up and photocopied them and, they chose to put them in a binder, as well, so that then they can add to it as needed...it's not like a bound book that it's hard to add to.

The repertoire choices made by worship leaders are strongly influenced by their worship team members. One participant described the networks via which worship team leaders and worship team members learn choruses: "Another thing that happens with choruses, choruses are passed, people learn them other places, and bring them to Holyrood, and also from recordings, I think. That sort of things happens. Which is less true of hymns I think." Typically, these other locations are gatherings with other evangelical Christians or recordings circulated among evangelicals, who are not necessarily Mennonites.

The most frequently mentioned local place at which chorus team members learned new repertoire was Glimpse of Glory, a chorus-singing night held by a local evangelical church. Many of the choruses learned by worship team members at Glimpse of Glory were subsequently chosen by worship team leaders for use at Holyrood. In the following interview excerpt, one music leader discusses the networks, including Glimpse of Glory, by which they learn of new choruses:

> *Jim*: Typically I get [new choruses] from [other music team members] involved with different churches...
>
> *J*: [Are they] involved in Glimpse of Glory in an official way?
>
> *Jim*: Yep...And [another worship team member] ... brings music from church or from her [Christian] school ... So I get it from various places. But it's not that I get it directly, I get it from people that bring it to me.

Compared to hymns, which are primarily chosen from the *Hymnal* shared by the majority of Canadian Mennonite churches, choruses are chosen through networks which are very local to Holyrood Mennonite Church. This network is highly disorganized and is contingent on personal and individual choice, and in this sense "local" to the particular people of Holyrood. That is, individuals choose of their own accord to be a part of other worship gatherings or to purchase Christian music recordings, from any place they happen upon, and bring these back to Holyrood.

On the other hand, a wider mass-media economy which is not unique to Holyrood in any way is also involved. This wider economy is well-organized and strongly though informally networked. The places and recordings which people happen upon will often be shared not only with others in the congregation, but also with other evangelicals in the West. As I noted concerning River West, recordings which are widely available across North America can directly influence performance at Holyrood so that it is similar to performances of the music elsewhere. One performer said the following: "The [song] I did last Sunday was quite a more newer one, which was one of Brian Doerksen's, that's a sort of Vineyard thing there too, and that one I just took off the CD."

The most frequently mentioned place at which worship team members purchased CD's and other forms of music was the evangelical Christian store, Blessings Christian Marketplace. I asked one congregational member who was a particular "fan" of Blessings to guide me on a "field trip" to the store:

*Fieldnotes Sep 20, 2000: Blessings Christian Marketplace "Field Trip"*

*I visited Blessings Christian Marketplace with Sarah. When we entered the store, I noticed mostly young folks working and shopping there. The store contains a wide variety of Christian-themed products: books, videos, games, music, clothing, posters and jewelry.*

*The music section was divided up into categories—Rock, Urban, Dance / Rap, Ska/Alternative, and several Praise categories. My guide was most knowledgeable about the praise sections of the music store, the sections which include music which might be performed at Holyrood as chorus singing. She showed me several discs in particular, identifying them as belonging to a label she liked. She described these discs as "anointed," a word used to describe praise music which I would understand as a quality enabling worship – the anointing of the Holy Spirit, but in a mediated form.*

### 6.8.2 Rehearsals

Worship team rehearsals occur at various times during the week prior to the worship service. As many of the worship team leaders and members are quite busy, the rehearsal is frequently scheduled immediately prior to the worship service on Sunday morning. Each worship team leader is responsible for scheduling and leading the rehearsals for their team.

Worship team rehearsals include learning of new repertoire, and practicing repertoire which will be performed on the coming Sunday. Worship team leaders do lead the rehearsals, and have the primary responsibility in choosing tempi, dynamics and other variable details relating to the performances of choruses.

Worship team leaders were interested in, and influenced by, the input of other worship team members at these rehearsals. Some chorus team members did not see themselves as working to influence music via their participation in the groups, seeing themselves rather as reflecting the decisions of the chorus team leader. For example, one chorus team member felt that he did not influence the way in which music was performed because he didn't make suggestions during rehearsals: "...Whatever I'm given I play. I don't make my own decisions."

On the other hand, some chorus members did make their feelings about details of chorus performance a matter of discussion at a chorus practice. Finally, some chorus members addressed such details by simply performing the music as they wished. For example, one chorus member was particularly concerned with tempi, feeling that certain tempi were appropriate for the emotional or lyrical content of certain songs, and that furthermore this helped the ensemble play together. This member said that rather than discussing this concern, she would simply "say, well how about this, and put out a tempo."

### 6.8.3 Congregational Members, Team Members, and Feedback

Most chorus team members and leaders did not feel they were influenced by the singing of the congregation as they performed on Sunday morning. On the other hand, chorus team members would work to increase participation in chorus singing in the church on weeks when they were not leading singing. For example, one chorus team member deliberately chose to sit with people who do not sing choruses:

> *J*: So you were saying you notice some people don't sing for the choruses, and I'm interested if there's [particular] parts of the congregation.
>
> *S*: If you walk into the church it's mostly people on the left-hand side...or that sit near the back [that do not sing the choruses]. And often I will go purposely to sit on the left-hand side, and raise my hands and clap and stuff...

In terms of feedback outside of the performance event itself, conversational and social feedback is offered by congregational singers to congregational leaders—though to a much lesser extent than it is for hymns—and to the leaders and members of the chorus teams. Feedback primarily occurs informally, with congregational members talking to chorus team members and leaders. Feedback to chorus team members is particularly important because of the strong influence that chorus team members have on the repertoire chosen by chorus team leaders. For example, the following interview participant felt that she had a voice in the music practiced at Holyrood through informal discussions with a friend of hers who was part of music-leadership at Holyrood.

> *J*: So people from the chorus team will ask you after the service, "Did you like these songs?"
>
> *M*: Well, [my friend] talks to me a lot and I think she then talks to [other music leaders] about that, and [they] pick the songs and they do get played, depending on how many people like them, and depending on what people want to sing.

## 6.9 A Congregational Performance

The following fieldnote describes and offers some commentary on the music of a particular service at Holyrood. The selection of hymns and choruses, and the sound of singing which can be observed on the video and audio recordings correlated to this example, offer a glimpse at typical patterns of music in worship at Holyrood.

*CD Video Example 6.1: Holyrood Mennonite Church Music 4/9/00*

*Fieldnotes 4/9/00*

*As I enter the church, the chorus group is singing. They are arranged on the raised platform at the front of the church; left to right, two singers, one in her twenties and one in her thirties, then Jim with his guitar, leading the group, and to his right, Victor behind a rock drum set. The young woman playing* *piano is off the stage, to the right, at the piano—hidden behind the youth who stand facing the chorus team near the front of the church. The worship team usually precedes the main service with chorus singing: one worship leader told me that the idea came from a worship conference which she attended, and that it's intended to set a tone of "praise" right from the outset at Holyrood.*

*Microphones are positioned in front of each of the performers, and so are music stands where large photocopies of the chord charts for the music of the day are held. No-one conducts or physically shows us when to sing; this worship team is fairly still, physically, though their faces reflect the emotions of the choruses which they sing—presently their faces are reflective, not smiling, an affect of reverent worship for this slow, ballad-like chorus, "Once Again":*

> *Once again I look upon the cross where You died*
> *I'm humbled by Your mercy and I'm broken inside*
> *Once again I thank You*
> *Once again You pour out Your life.*

*While the affect of the song is reverent—setting a mood of "worship" from the very beginning of the service, the congregational members are not all in a worship mode just yet: the amplified music plays as people walk in, and it is part of their "soundworld" whether they sing along or not. It becomes a backdrop for some as they adjust from hurrying from their house to the church, calming their kids down, getting arranged on the church pew. Others are physically engaged with the song, some looking up in worship, raising their hands, others looking to the band at the front, swaying and singing.*

*The "soundscape" for choruses seems to be quite shallow, as the front speakers provide a lot of sound—I am only able to hear the people fairly immediately around me, and the chorus. Today I am standing next to an enthusiastic singer, who sings confidently and harmonizes with me. After the chorus time ends, quietly, the chorus team remains in place and the worship leader walks* *up to the pulpit and bows her head, the chorus team and then the congregation following her. She prays quietly and our heads are all bowed.*

*Today is my day to do "worship music"—a time for worshipful reflection and also an opportunity for congregational members to share their musical gifts publicly. Due to the fact that this is a very busy week, I've chosen an American folk hymn which I know well, "What Wondrous Love is This," to perform a capella. I get up and walk up front quickly. I realize I don't have the note properly and check it twice on the piano before I sing. I always try to watch the congregation—to catch someone's eye while I sing—so that I can engage them in the song. I see that some people are reading their bulletins, other watching intently; most of the adult bodies are still. It is sometimes very worshipful for me to sing, but today I am tired, and so I do not feel particularly focussed on worshipping—just singing. I finish the song, and smile and walk down to sit with my wife again.*

*Since the songleader has taken graduate education in theology and worship, I always find it very interesting to sing and reflect on the songs which she's carefully picked. She stands up, coming from out of the congregation, and walks behind the pulpit to lead us. She invites us to stand and sing, "Let the Whole Creation Cry"—a resounding mainline Protestant hymn, the text of which both describes the gathered community in praise, and is the voice of that community praising God—"Alleluia." From the songleader's vantage point at the front of the church, the centre of the seashell of the auditorium, the sound of the congregation's singing is totally enveloping. It is easy to hear the difference between the confident sounds the congregation is capable of when they know a hymn well, and the tentative and sometimes sparse sound made when a hymn is new to the congregation.*

*I find it particularly interesting to watch the pastor and the worship leader sing along with the hymn. They stand on the raised area at the front of the church, facing the congregation, behind the songleader. They share a hymnbook, holding it high and looking intently at the page, and now and again up* *at the songleader—in some senses part of the congregation and in some sense leading, an example to the congregation of proper participation in hymns. This is particularly interesting in that it differs from their placement during the chorus time; during the choruses, the worship leader and pastor often stand in the congregation, facing the chorus team at front, reinforcing their role as* part *of the congregation.*

*When the second verse begins, the piano stops very briefly, and the songleader breathes—the congregation breathes with her, and comes in confidently as does the piano, in tempo after "tuning in" to an ensemble tempo at the breath together. When the song is finished, and the songleader steps down and rejoins the congregation, the worship leader stands and makes her way to the pulpit...*

*At the end of the service, the songleader once again rises for the closing hymn. The worship leader has just announced that we should remain standing after this last hymn, so that we can read the benediction together. The last hymn is often chosen to embody either an ethical sending-out—lyrics naming the task of Christian living during the coming week—or a blessing as we go out. Today, the songleader has chosen a hymn in Swahili, "Bwana Awabariki/May God Grant us a Blessing," and has asked Victor to play drums for it. Victor begins to play the drums and the songleader sings the melody to us, in rhythm with Victor's drums, for one verse, so that we can learn this new song.*

*On the second time, through, most everyone is singing along with the melody, or if they can find it, the harmony. For this song, the songleader does not conduct; instead, she asks us to face each other in the congregation (not the front of the church, as would be usual), and to sing to each other. The songleader's arms move in time to the music, but not in a pattern; remarkably, everyone sings together in any case. This song is not West African, though Victor is; nonetheless, from the congregation, it seems a perfect marriage of Western and African songleading and singing, embodying some of the complex demographic of Holyrood, which has both a significant African population and* *a majority North American population.*

## 6.10 The Blended Service: Holyrood as Diverse Congregation

Holyrood's blended service was seen by some as embodying tolerant relationships within a congregation which was inclusive of diversity; others saw conflicts between various groups expressed in Holyrood's multiple musics. Music articulated the presence of demographic and taste subgroups of the congregation by its arrangement in space and time. It represented an arena in which various groups and individuals had a voice of influence over congregational practice. Others saw the musical practice at Holyrood as symbolically extending outwards to other Christians in other parts of the world, through the use of music from other parts of the world.

Participants understood the music at Holyrood as representing a wide range of styles, which relate to the wide range of backgrounds or social positions of congregational members. For example, the one interviewee described the range of music performed as "[Wesleyan hymns], the German chorales, though that's not as often I think; there's gospel and then contemporary—you have simple choruses as well as contemporary hymns... [and] foreign, some African, Hispanic songs as well." This interviewee felt that the importance of this spread of music was in its relationship to the many different musical taste groups in the congregation, aiding them in their worship. The interviewee expressed this idea in terms of multiple ethnic cultures, including his own: "Certain music resonates more in [my own] culture" and thus is valuable to include.

I will discuss several related pairs of groups to which music related at Holyrood: the dualities of old and young, of former members of Faith Mennonite and Holyrood Mennonite, and white North American and French-speaking African.

### 6.10.1 Diversity of Age: Old / Young

Music was an arena of both conflict and compromise between older and younger members of the congregation. In addition to hymns found in the *Hymnal*, older persons often identified the *Lifesongs* as an important repertoire of music for them.

The performance context of the *Lifesongs* was a time of singing frequently held on Sunday morning before the service began. These times of singing were led by various songleaders, and accompanied by a pianist. The congregation was usually not gathered during this time, but many older members were in the sanctuary. The songleaders led some songs of their own choosing, but they would also ask for suggestions from the congregational singers, who would usually shout out the number of the hymn they wished to sing. Most of the requested hymns were from the *Lifesongs* book, though some were from the *Hymnal*. As an occasional songleader of this singing time, I found that many of the songs were new to me but that congregational members often knew them well enough that they neither looked at their hymnals nor watched my conducting and tempi, but rather sang the songs as they remembered them.

The *Hymnal*, though it contained several songs in common with the *Lifesongs*, did not possess the same appeal for longtime hymn singers at Holyrood. For example, the following fieldnote shows the song leader "placing" a hymn as new and non-traditional:

*Fieldnote 5/15/2000*

*During the first hymn, "Christ is our cornerstone," I can hear people all around me singing confidently and loudly. The next hymn is "Gentle shepherd, come and lead us," a newer hymn from the new blue* Hymnal. *The songleader introduces it: "The next hymn is not moving like Christ is our cornerstone... Well, it is moving, but it moves differently."*

The songleader's allusion to the affect of a familiar hymn—something with a place in the history of middle-aged and older persons at Holyrood—in contrast with the "different" affect of a new hymn underlines the importance of historical placement of church music within a group's own history.

On the other hand, as a congregational leader pointed out, "The youth fit in with the choruses...every music team involves at least one youth, if not multiple youths. With the hymns, all our songleaders are twenty-something or older, so there aren't any youth involved in that." Many young interviewees expressed a preference for choruses versus hymns. The performance context of the choruses has already been discussed.

Youth and older participants at Holyrood, then, are in a somewhat analogous position in that music which they prefer is somewhat marginal, performed at other times than during the main "body" of the service, and contained in texts other than the primary text used, the Mennonite *Hymnal.* This resulted in some conflicts over the musical "space" of songbooks in the pews. Prior to my time of research, the problem of needing three books for one worship service was temporarily "solved" by removing the *Lifesongs* books from the pews. The books were soon put back into the pews due to concerns expressed by many older congregational members.

There is some irony in this conflict over space in terms of the genre history of the *Lifesongs.* The *Lifesongs* were at one time a popular music which some older members remembered singing as young people for entertainment. Subsequently, as this generation became adults, the gospel repertoire became understood as part of the primary hymnody of the church. However, at present it is again becoming less central to the church and vies for musical space with the popular music of the young people.

Young persons, on the other hand, expressed occasionally the wish that more congregational members would sing the choruses. One young participant reported the following: "I notice a lot of people don't sing the choruses, older people...or people who refuse to sing." However, this respondent, however, was not too discouraged by this, since in their opinion, even those members of Holyrood who don't sing a particular music do enjoy listening to most music.

The inclusion in and around the service of both the *Lifesongs* and the choruses, however, was affirmed by both older and younger participants as expressing respect for both generations of church members. Most respondents felt that a crisis point of conflict about music in the congregation was past, and that the current musical compromise was acceptably inclusive. One participant noted that both hymns and choruses at Holyrood were practiced in a way that could include older participants as well as younger participants:

> I like the balance between choruses and hymns. I like the fact that we use hymnals, as opposed to some churches where I go to where they have hymns but they're up on an overhead. I don't really like that. I think for that reason it meets the needs of a variety of people, you know, some of the young people as well as I think the older people in our congregation, which is something that I think is important for a church to meet.

### 6.10.2 Diversity within Mennonite origins: Faith Mennonite / Holyrood Mennonite

The blended musical style of service at Holyrood in part expresses the union of two important subgroups in the congregation: the original, Mennonite Church group which began Holyrood, and the mostly Russian Mennonite (General Conference) church, Faith Mennonite Church, many members of which joined Holyrood en masse about four years before I began my fieldwork at Holyrood.

Faith Mennonite was begun as an outreach by First Mennonite Church, and was focussed on being a church for its surrounding neighborhood north of the river, near Edmonton's downtown (Epp, 1998 (1986)). However, due to dwindling membership and financial problems, it closed its doors in 1996 and many of its members joined Holyrood Mennonite Church. One leader described this transition in terms of both age and youth and musical style:

> A group that was trained musically have aged. And the younger

> people who were probably the children of that generation are not as... interested... in singing four-part harmony or doing solos. [Then] we had this change with the new people [of Faith Mennonite] coming to the community.

Another participant told me the story of the first Sunday at which Faith Mennonite persons led singing, in a contemporary chorus style, at Holyrood. The congregation sang, and when it came time for sharing, a congregational leader who had been at Holyrood for some time stood up and said "Folks, I feel we have come into an inheritance here." The coming of Faith is seen here as strengthening the music at Holyrood by providing new music and musical talent, rather than supplanting the music which Holyrood was already providing.

Participants who had been members of Faith Mennonite remembered singing hymns from an evangelical Protestant hymnal. One young adult member fondly described her experiences singing 1970s choruses from the Mennonite *Sing and Rejoice* chorus book (Schmidt, 1979). Persons from Faith Mennonite were involved in both singing and leading hymns and choruses at Holyrood.

Genre is of key importance here, in terms of its relationship to memories of identities now subsumed into Holyrood. For example, since Faith was a younger church, singing choruses from *Sing and Rejoice* form key memories of childhood in church for former members of Faith. On the other hand, for longtime members of Holyrood, singing songs from the Swiss Mennonite tradition and from the *Lifesongs* gospel hymn book form key memories of childhood experiences of church.

### 6.10.3 Diversity of Language and Race: French-African Congregational Members

French-speaking Africans at Holyrood represented an important part of the congregation with significant musical interests and gifts. The group of French-Africans arrived at Holyrood as new immigrants, and in some cases refugees and asylum seekers, while I was a member there. The church provided translators who would sit with these persons and translate the sermon or other conversation into French.

French-speaking African members participated in worship teams, and also occasionally contributed solo "special music" to the church. Solo music was chosen and in some cases written by these performers, and so West African music was performed at Holyrood. Through the participation of various French African members in music, the group had an impact on musical performance at Holyrood Mennonite Church.

In addition, as a songleader, the presence of this group made me more likely to choose African hymns from the *Hymnal*, which I hoped would appeal to these congregational members. In sum, both the existing musicians at Holyrood and the newly arrived French African musicians attempted to reach out to each other and engage each other.

However, several problems and miscommunications arose between these groups. Firstly, there was the issue of language differences: when French-speaking African participants began to contribute solos as "special music," both the music and language sounded strange to some Anglophone church members. Some Anglophone members complained that they wished to understand what the lyrical content of the music was. A congregational leader explained this conflict to me:

> ... there's so much French that can be part of this church—and it's not a French[-speaking] church—with the immigrants that come from French Africa, [we've] heard complaints and now what [we] do is try to make sure that the English words are spoken, so people can hear them, so it's not that we don't have people sing in French or in their African dialect... [We're] educating those that don't understand the language to be tolerant, and... also helping people be able to still share their gifts and praise in the language of their childhood.

Congregational singing of hymns also presented an area of difficulty, since the learning, training and transmission practices for hymns usually presume a background in reading Western music notation. Participants, including French-speaking Africans who had background learning music by ear but not reading notes, found this difficult. One African musician suggested that the music he learned in Africa was similar to choruses: different in that it was structured in call-and-response forms, but similar in that it was repetitive and learned by ear. In this musician's home country, "we don't read, we know the songs by heart." Many African participants were able to learn the hymns which were new to them by standing next to a confident singer and quickly picking up the melody.

In addition, the mode of performance in church was different. One African participant noted that he felt encouraged to hold back on volume and physical enthusiasm when he sang in church. However, in his home church in Africa, "when one sings, one sings for God! One *sings*! One dances! One sings in a very loud voice!"

Finally, as a songleader I misunderstood the connection between African participants and African songs in the *Hymnal*. Most Africans whom I interviewed did not identify with the African music performed at Holyrood as their own. For example, one participant expressed succinctly that "African" music, as a genre, is too unspecific to really speak to him as a member of a particular African group.

> ...you see in Africa, there are a lot of, in every country in Africa different tribes and different cultures. Like for instance in my country, when people from my place, when they're singing and beating the drums and putting everything together, it sounds quite different from when [other groups]...It's different, even the way we dance. Everything.

Another African interviewee appreciated the practice of singing African music at Holyrood, but not for the reasons I expected. He appreciated African music at Holyrood because it parallels the practice of his home (African) church which also practiced music from other places.

> It's a good thing. [In my country] we do, for the most part, music [from our country], in the churches, most of the time we do music [from our country], that is to say, using the rhythms [of our country]. but we have other songs, which we sing, using other rhythms, for example the rhythms of people to the south...we mix them, it's not only music [from our country], and so I myself, when I see at Holyrood, that we sing African songs as well, that's good.

While African members remained at Holyrood during my research, a French-speaking African congregation was in the end begun in Edmonton by some of the French-speaking African members of Holyrood. This congregation was just beginning when I left Edmonton, and at that time attended inter-church gatherings with other Mennonite churches.

### 6.10.4 The Value of Hymns: Tradition and traditions

Some broad commonalities existed among participants concerning understandings of the value of singing hymns at Holyrood. Hymns were understood by many interviewees as expressing connections to other Mennonite groups—worshipping in a particularly "Mennonite" way. One participant contrasted this church connection to that of choruses: "...some of these choruses have come out of the Pentecostal.... [In the Mennonite church] where I grew up, you know, hymns were a big thing and we never sang any choruses, even when I left there, they were not singing any choruses."

Michael's story exemplifies the connections between hymns and wider Mennonite Church activity. Michael learned to sing hymns in the Mennonite church he attended as a child, but feels he really began to appreciate them as a high-school student at a Mennonite high school. He continued on at a Mennonite

Figure 6.7: Photograph of African Members of Holyrood Mennonite Church

college, where he was active in choirs and other musical activities. He identifies his Mennonite high-school and college as the places where he came to understand and appreciate hymns as theology. Through these experiences, he came to appreciate the conference-supported hymnals as most closely related to a particularly Mennonite theology.

Another aspect of the understandings of the value of hymns involves the association of hymns with "tradition" in the broad sense. Usually this association with tradition is also connected to the idea that hymns are particularly thoughtful or profound. In the following interview excerpt, one participant explains his feeling that hymns are more deeply meaningful by describing a process of accrual of meaning over generations: a particularly lively understanding of tradition.

> I think some of it has to do with the fact that they've been filtered, maybe is the word, through history. The ones that have lasted through that kind of filtering process have probably been, if not

> remarkable, they would be the ones that have that content that people really feel like there is something in that song that they can relate to and that has meaning for them. Some of the new [songs] haven't had that process yet, not to the same extent. We're talking hundreds of years for some of those old hymns... And it has to do with the fact that, why would people sing them over and over again? It's because they really mean something to them, generation after generation after generation, somehow it relates to them.

Perhaps related to this idea was the concept that all hymns, including new and international hymns, arise from "traditions" and represent these traditions. For the examples I cited above, this idea might simply correspond to "hymns of our tradition" or "hymns of Mennonite tradition." Others phrased this understanding in terms of wider geographies: that is, that hymns can represent "African" tradition or "Indian" tradition, and furthermore that as part of a church which includes all of these traditions, it is important to sing these hymns in order to embody the group as a whole.

### 6.10.5 The Value of Choruses: The Ability to Praise

Choruses, on the other hand, were understood as valuable due to the connections they represented both with Christians everywhere in the present time, and with people who are non-Christian. This pan-evangelical understanding was frequently underscored by interviewees who expressed the passion they felt for chorus-singing at Holyrood in terms of the feelings they experienced singing choruses elsewhere.

Choruses were sometimes opposed to hymns as expressing a direct praise *of* God, rather than thinking *about* God in the manner of a hymn. This was in part because choruses were seen as technically less difficult to sing than hymns, and less reliant on reading while singing, which left more room in participants to concentrate on God.

There was a greater appreciation of the relationship between the particular song and the affect, or state of worship, which it could produce in the participant. The reasons for which choruses were chosen were often conceived in terms of cause and effect: "I don't want to wreck someone's worship, I want to bring them into worship, I also want to worship." Such aspects of the presentation of a chorus as tempo or slight textual variations were also seen as allowing or preventing worship.

Choruses were understood as representing music which was accessible to anyone, particularly to those new to the church. This was sometimes described in terms of generations: "choruses are like the popular music of young people, and young people need to be part of the church in order for the church to have a future."

### 6.10.6 Worship: A Value Shared Across Genres

One key concept which came up in the interviews, to which several other concepts were related, was "worship." Worship, in the sense in which it is understood at Holyrood, might roughly be defined as a particular social space in which a participant feels the presence of and communicates with God, given that the correct affective conditions—mood, music, the comfortable presence of others—are present. Both song leaders and worship team leaders often saw their role as a facilitator of worship.

There were two common understandings of "worship" which organized other terms which could be attached to "worshipful" experiences of music. The understandings of music in worship can be contrasted, as more personally performed and felt, versus more corporately performed and felt. Though it might seem as if the first understanding of "worship" fits with values associated with hymns, and the second with values associated with choruses, this was not uniformly the case.

The first group of terms frequently used to describe worshipful music at Holyrood were "singability," "musicality," and also "familiarity." These terms focus specifically on the place of music and genre in the personal or group history of the participant. In this way of understanding worship, music must satisfy certain conditions, these being strongly related to personal histories, to allow a particular person to enter into worship. Both the emphasis on choosing familiar hymns, and technically accessible choruses were often explained with reference to this understanding of worship.

For example, I'll relate the story of one Holyrood Mennonite Church member, Becky. Becky grew up in a rural church, which was not Mennonite but rather was connected with another Anabaptist group. Her mother was very musical, having a background of solo and quartet singing in her own family. Becky and her family sang frequently, and she learned to "sing parts" in this way. She described a particularly poignant memory of her family gathering around her aunt, who had just had a stroke and was dying. The family began to sing, in parts, a hymn familiar to the aunt—and she knew it, it reached her despite the fact that she had just had a stroke. Later, as an adult, Becky studied theology and music and this strongly influences her choice of and preferences among hymns. However, she attributes her love of hymns to her family background. Becky is also very open to new hymns, and she attributes this to her frequent reading and singing of new hymns with her family as a child,

A second group of terms had to do with the relationship of a piece of music to the service as a whole, and especially to the Scriptural or liturgical texts of the particular service: "text" (of the hymns i.e. lyrics) was the most frequently mentioned idea here. "Text"ual value was contrasted with "repetition," or "lack of depth." This second group of terms took affect into account as well as cognitive concerns, but primarily understood worship as corporate. That is, worship is enabled by corporate interaction with shared scriptures or theological understandings, and music is a corporate avenue of interaction with these understandings. For example, because the lectionary employed by the whole church provides us with these Scriptural texts having this affect, it is the job of the music to provide us with an entrance into that affect and the job of the worshipper to enter into that affect. When songleaders chose new choruses, or hymns whether familiar or not, for their relationship to the Scriptural texts or themes of the worship service, this choice was usually explained with reference to this understanding of worship.

## 6.11 Conclusions: An Account of Music's Role at Holyrood

How, then, does a diversity of musical practices function in terms of Holyrood's diversity of internal ethnicities and other registers of identity? Participants primarily answered this question by claiming that this diversity of musics both represented and allowed for worship on the part of each subgroup in the congregation. Tolerance of diverse musical genres was seen by participants to allow for each person in the church to find their "niche," a place where they could contribute something to the congregation and also an avenue by which they could participate fully in worship. Several participants suggested further that diverse musics were not only tolerated but were embraced by most church members, so that new musics and ways of worshipping were truly a corporate congregational activity.

One might sum up these observations this way: Holyrood is a church where many people arrive from elsewhere. Holyrood seeks to include the traditions of all of its members and thus its music is diverse. Through this inclusion, the church community as a whole performs the musics of each of its members and in this act the church constitutes itself as both diverse and as a single church group.

This insider understanding of the role of music at Holyrood might be extended as follows, in response to some of the questions I posed at the outset of this chapter. Ethnicity continues to matter at Holyrood, in terms of musical practices, in that musical training associated with ethnic backgrounds provides skill sets, such as music reading or learning by ear, and contexts for understanding music, such as meaningful associations based on histories of singing a particular genre.

On the other hand, music enables a sense of group identity between diverse ethnicities at Holyrood because musical practice is a "portable" skill which can be taught and learned in a variety of ways, and because musical practice in church is corporate and not primarily structured as performer and audience. For example, though many church members read music, French African musicians were able to participate in Swiss and Russian Mennonite hymns because they learned melodies by ear from Swiss and Russian Mennonite singers. Similarly, the use of chorus books rather than overheads allowed for older singers, who had not grown up with choruses or learning by ear, to participate more easily in singing choruses. The singing of these diverse repertoires of music corporately allowed for a sense of group identity including the identities of many subgroups to emerge, which was strongly valued by participants.

At the same time, musical practice at Holyrood is not only a place of tolerance, compromise and transformation, but also an area of conflict between diverse subgroups. For example, the departure of the French African participants shows that conflicts, which were at times articulated by music, were not always resolved within the group. However, most interviewees nonetheless placed a high value on the blended service and its diverse musics. Rather than being a stumbling block of insoluble conflict, music more often functioned as a place of negotiation where conflict over musical genre gave way to new understandings of and musical practices representing the congregation as a diverse whole.

# Chapter 7

# The Good Friday Service

## 7.1 Introduction

Edmonton's inter-Mennonite worship service happens on Good Friday every year. The service has been held for some time, and all Mennonite-affiliated churches of Edmonton, including the three churches of this study, are invited.[1] This chapter will begin with a description of the processes which lead up to the Good Friday service, present the service held on April 13, 2001, which I attended, and responses to that service from members of the three churches of this study, and will offer conclusions concerning music's contribution to identity for the three Mennonite churches on the basis of their interactions in this service and their perceptions of each other.

## 7.2 Where: A Middle Ground

The service is held at the Myer Horowitz Theatre, a 720-seat concert hall and theatre in the University of Alberta Students Union Building. The Theatre hosts popular music concerts, such as Ladysmith Black Mambazo, plays, and dance events, such as the Ballet Jazz de Montréal. The venue is equipped with professional lighting and audio equipment and has a stage with ample room for a choir.

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[1] These congregations include: Edmonton Chinese Mennonite Church, Edmonton Vietnamese Mennonite Fellowship, First Mennonite Church, Holyrood Mennonite Church, Lendrum Mennonite Brethren Church, River West Christian Church, Sunrise Community Church, and Summerside Community Church.

In short, the theatre presents an admirable middle ground for the Mennonite churches of Edmonton in which to hold their Good Friday service. It is large enough so that attendees will easily find seats and its stage is large enough to accommodate a sizable choir. It is located in a space not associated with any one church, thus not privileging any one church or conference over another. Finally, its acoustics are acceptable, though not excellent, for congregational singing of hymns, and it has a fine setup for amplified music as well.

## 7.3 The Who and the What: Organizing the Good Friday Service

Roles important to planning and performing music at the Good Friday service include: the ministerial, the Good Friday service committee, the leaders in the host church who collaborate with this committee, the choir conductor and songleader, the choir, the worship team, and special music groups such as the Chinese Mennonite choir.

Table 7.1 summarizes the key processes and roles important to the Good Friday service, including an indication of which church each role was associated with during the Good Friday service of 2001.

### 7.3.1 The Ministerial

The Good Friday service is organized by the Mennonite ministerial of Edmonton, which is the group of all of the ministers from area Mennonite churches. Each year, a particular church group is the main organizer, a role sometimes called "the sponsoring church" or the "host," but this responsibility rotates every year. Prior to the merger of the General Conference and Mennonite Church in Canada, this responsibility rotated between Mennonite Brethren, General Conference, and Mennonite Church leadership.

| Role Number | Role | Church | Processes |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | ministerial | all churches | 1 |
| 2 | Good Friday service committee | all churches | 3 |
| 3 | church leaders | First | 2, 3 |
| 4 | choir conductor | First | 4, 6, 7 |
| 5 | songleader | First | 7 |
| 6 | pianist | First | 6, 7 |
| 7 | choir member | First et al | 6, 7 |
| 8 | worship team | First and River West | 7 |
| 9 | special music groups | Chinese Mennonite Church | 5, 7 |
| 10 | congregational member | all churches | 7, 8 |

| Process Number | Process | Participants |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | select sponsor church and committee | 1 |
| 2 | select speaker | 3 |
| 3 | plan service, hymns and choruses, and special music group selection | 2, 3 |
| 4 | select choir repertoire | 4 |
| 5 | select special music | 9 |
| 6 | choir rehearsals | 4, 6, 7 |
| 7 | performance | 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 |
| 8 | feedback | 10 |
| 9 | loop | |

Repertoire Source: Hymnal, Choral Repertoire, Choruses

Table 7.1: Roles and Processes in the Good Friday Service (2001)

Presently, the responsibility has rotated between a Mennonite Brethren church (including Lendrum Mennonite Brethren and River West Christian Church), First Mennonite Church, and Holyrood Mennonite Church. This new order preserves a movement between Mennonite Brethren, former General Conference and former Mennonite Church leadership for the event.

Prior to the Easter season the ministerial meets and selects a committee, chosen from each church represented on the ministerial, to plan the service together.

### 7.3.2 The Sponsoring Church

The church that is the primary organizer of the event selects a speaker for the event, usually a pastor or theologian working at a college or university of their own denomination, a year in advance. The speaker has some role in determining the musical content of the worship service; for example, one speaker structured the service around a series of dramatic monologues depicting Christ's progress towards the cross. The music chosen by the choir and the congregational music reflected this somber feeling. On another occasion, the themes of the service were oriented more towards the victory represented by the cross, and the music chosen reflected these relatively uplifting themes.

The Good Friday service on which this chapter centres was sponsored by First Mennonite Church. First Mennonite invited John Rempel, who is a Mennonite pastor in New York City, to come and reflect on interpretations of Jesus' role in Good Friday.

### 7.3.3 The Good Friday Service Committee

This committee meets to plan the service, including all the musical details of the service. Most importantly, the committee selects a songleader, accompanying musicians such as a pianist or a worship band, and a choir leader. Often these roles are filled by members of the church that is the primary organizer of the event that year; however, an attempt is made to include participants from each church. For example, in the year that Holyrood led the service, I was asked to lead songs for the service. The accompanist with whom I led hymns was from First Mennonite, however.

During the 2001 service, persons from First Mennonite—a pianist, a violinist, a guitarist, and the choir—were the musical mainstays of the service. In contrast, a few Holyrood members were part of the choir, and just one River West musician helped with leading the few choruses which were sung.

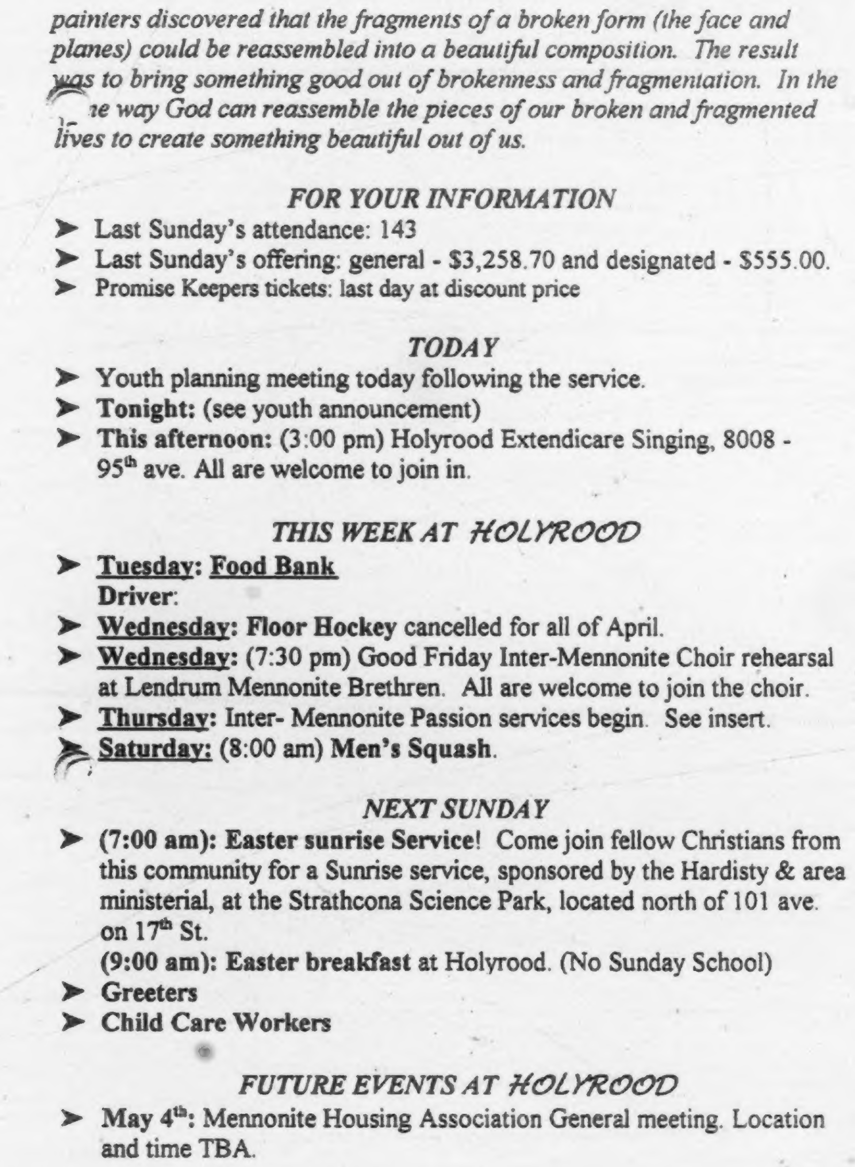
### 7.3.4 Choir Rehearsals and other Preparation

The choir leader has in the past circulated among member churches, particularly between First Mennonite and Lendrum Mennonite Brethren, who have a number of members who are skilled conductors. The choir itself is made up of members from each of the Mennonite churches, and it is open to anyone who wishes to join.

The choir for the service on which this chapter focusses was primarily the First Mennonite Church choir, with several additions from Holyrood and from Lendrum Mennonite Brethren Church.

The opportunity to sing in the choir and participate in the service are publicized in each member church through announcements made during church. For example, figure 7.1 shows a Holyrood Mennonite Church bulletin promoting the service and the choir. Several rehearsals are held before the service, sometimes at the church which is sponsoring the service and sometimes at another location. Anyone who wishes to sing arrives at the rehearsal, led by the conductor and pianist the committee has chosen.

Besides the choir rehearsal and any rehearsals held by special music ensembles chosen for the event, no rehearsals are held for the event. The service is fairly complex, often involving readers, several musical ensembles, and a speaker, but co-ordination between these groups is primarily worked out first at the committee meeting and subsequently through phone conversations between those who participate in the event.



*painters discovered that the fragments of a broken form (the face and planes) could be reassembled into a beautiful composition. The result was to bring something good out of brokenness and fragmentation. In the [illegible]e way God can reassemble the pieces of our broken and fragmented lives to create something beautiful out of us.*

### *FOR YOUR INFORMATION*

- Last Sunday's attendance: 143
- Last Sunday's offering: general - $3,258.70 and designated - $555.00.
- Promise Keepers tickets: last day at discount price

### *TODAY*

- Youth planning meeting today following the service.
- **Tonight:** (see youth announcement)
- **This afternoon:** (3:00 pm) Holyrood Extendicare Singing, 8008 - 95th ave. All are welcome to join in.

### *THIS WEEK AT HOLYROOD*

- **Tuesday: Food Bank**
  **Driver**:
- **Wednesday: Floor Hockey** cancelled for all of April.
- **Wednesday:** (7:30 pm) Good Friday Inter-Mennonite Choir rehearsal at Lendrum Mennonite Brethren. All are welcome to join the choir.
- **Thursday:** Inter- Mennonite Passion services begin. See insert.
- **Saturday:** (8:00 am) **Men's Squash**.

### *NEXT SUNDAY*

- **(7:00 am): Easter sunrise Service**! Come join fellow Christians from this community for a Sunrise service, sponsored by the Hardisty & area ministerial, at the Strathcona Science Park, located north of 101 ave. on 17th St.
  **(9:00 am): Easter breakfast** at Holyrood. (No Sunday School)
- **Greeters**
- **Child Care Workers**

### *FUTURE EVENTS AT HOLYROOD*

- **May 4th:** Mennonite Housing Association General meeting. Location and time TBA.

Figure 7.1: Photograph of Holyrood's Bulletin Promoting Good Friday Service

In addition, there is some time prior to the service where the various musicians are present at the Myer Horowitz Theatre to do whatever last-minute co-ordination that needs to be done. For example, the placement of the choir on stage, sound checks, and co-ordination between the songleader and accompanying musicians is usually worked out at this point.

## 7.4 The Music of the Good Friday Service

*Fieldnotes April 13, 2001*

*I sat in the centre of the back of the low-lit concert hall, which was full of people I know from many different churches. The dark walls and front of the room gave way to a brightly lit stage, on which there stood two guitarists on the far left, a pianist, and then a conductor in the middle of the stage. There were seats on risers behind this ensemble on which the choir was seated.*

*After a welcome from the pastor of First Mennonite, we began the singing with a chorus—"Lord I Lift Your Name on High," accompanied by guitars and a pianist, and, surprisingly, conducted by the songleader. The sound of the chorus was tentative, both from the congregation and from the audio on stage. In particular, the guitars were very quiet in the mix which came from the amplifiers.*

*The presentation of "Lord I Lift Your Name" in the program was also interesting: printed with musical notation, the chorus is labelled a "hymn" in the program.*

*As special music, a choir from the Chinese Mennonite church sang several songs. First, the choir and songs were introduced by the pianist, who had composed the song sung by the choir: the text, in Chinese, had to do with the unconditional love of God, expressed in the sacrifice of Christ for us on the cross, for our sins. The all-female choir was led by the pianist, who played a florid tonal (popular-classical) accompaniment for what sounded like a traditional Chinese folk-song melody, sung by the choir.*

*The primary choir of the service sat on stage behind the Chinese choir and watched. The Chinese Mennonite choir's ensemble sound was excellent, and the pianist was virtuosic. For me, and I would suggest, for many worshippers, this was the least familiar and comprehensible of the musics of this service, although the greatest effort was made to contextualize and even to translate it for most of the worshippers.*

. . .

*The inter-Mennonite choir sang several pieces narrating the Good Friday story, interspersed with scripture readings: a new Anglican-anthem style piece depicting the Golgotha scene and the crucifixion, and an Alice Parker arrangement of "Jesus Died on Calvary's Mountain," an Appalachian hymn. The choir's strong four-part harmony brought across both the British anthem and the folk song with admirable clarity.*

. . .

*As a large, gathered congregation, we sang several German hymns. When we sang J.S. Bach's "O Sacred Head Now Wounded," I particularly noticed that nearly everyone around me was singing confidently. It struck me what a difficult piece this was, with its chromaticisms and continuous passing tones, and what a remarkable gathering this was: persons from many different churches, with many different ways of worshipping and singing, and yet this group could still sing each difficult line of this great hymn without straining or faltering. The warm sound of the group, and the way it filled the hall, seemed for a moment to embody a community with a shared faith and a shared voice, despite our differences.*

*The pastor of Holyrood, who is of Québeçois French Catholic background, led communion.*[2] *He is wonderful at this. He spoke the words about the bread and cup with great dignity. As he gave the bread to all the elders, and the servers returning from the congregation, he said "The body of Christ, broken*

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[2] Since the time of the fieldwork, this pastor has moved elsewhere and Holyrood now has a new pastor.

*for you" to each person, quietly.*

## 7.5 Insider Discourses? Musical Performance and Reception

Literary scholar Hildi Froese Tiessen (1998) has argued that Russian Mennonites, including present-day Mennonite writers, have used language as a shibboleth, or a mark of insider status: by speaking Dutch in a Low German-speaking country, Low German in a High German-speaking country, and both Low and High German in English and Russian-speaking countries, the Mennonites have constructed insider discourses unintelligible to outsiders. Tiessen's argument hinges on Mennonites speaking with each other in the context of a non-Mennonite society. The argument begs the question: what happens when Mennonites of different groups speak to each other? Are insider discourses of music shared sufficiently between different groups so that music is not a "shibboleth" between them?

Having been a worshipper at several of the churches present at the Good Friday service, I was most struck by the presentation of musics in ways which could read one way to the performer, who was a member of one church, and another to an audience member, who was of another church. The following are several speculative observations concerning musical performance and reception between churches in the service. These observations underline the degree to which the musical system at each church is particular to that church, in terms of both the social structures which it engenders and the structures of meaning associated with repertoires and modes of performance.

### 7.5.1 A Songleader for Hymns from First Mennonite

The songleader and choral conductor, who conducted all the hymns of the program, was a member of First Mennonite. However, as I noted above, there is a tradition of not conducting hymns at First Mennonite.

The decision to conduct hymns here may have represented a concession to what was perceived as "the norm" for songleading in most churches. For example, for members of Holyrood, at which all hymns are conducted, this mode of songleading will not have seemed at all out of the ordinary, and will have aided the group in singing together.

Interestingly, the use of a conductor may have been helpful for members of First Mennonite in their performance of the chorus piece which we sang. While members of Holyrood and River West are used to singing these pieces by ear, without a conductor, a songleader might be a bridge between a chorus song and the mode of performance employed by the choirs at First Mennonite Church.

The choice of hymns too represents the preferences of a Russian Mennonite church. Of the congregational songs sung, one was a chorus, one was a gospel hymn, two were new hymns from the Iona and Taizé communities, and four were German or Wesleyan hymns. While there was clearly enough common ground among congregational singers to produce a wonderful sound on, for example, "O Sacred Head Now Wounded," the congregational singing was weighted towards this repertoire and away from American gospel hymns and contemporary worship music, which might be more "core repertoire" for the other Mennonite churches.

### 7.5.2 The *Hymnal* as an Insider Discourse

During the communion part of the service, the pianist played, sensitively and quietly, several communion hymns from the Taizé and Iona repertoire which are found in the *Hymnal*. These communion hymns are a complex example of music functioning as a shibboleth: the significance of the hymns hinges on their text being associated with their tunes to the participants.

Since these hymns are from the *Hymnal* employed by Mennonite Church Canada, worshippers from both Holyrood Mennonite Church and First Mennonite Church would have recognized the tunes as communion hymns, which were performed at their own churches. These members could make an intelligible symbolic connection between the tune of the hymn and a text which addresses the practice of communion.

On the other hand, the worshippers from the Mennonite Brethren Churches and other churches, such as the Chinese Mennonite Church, will have experienced the songs as a new melody only, that is, unintelligible, symbolically speaking.

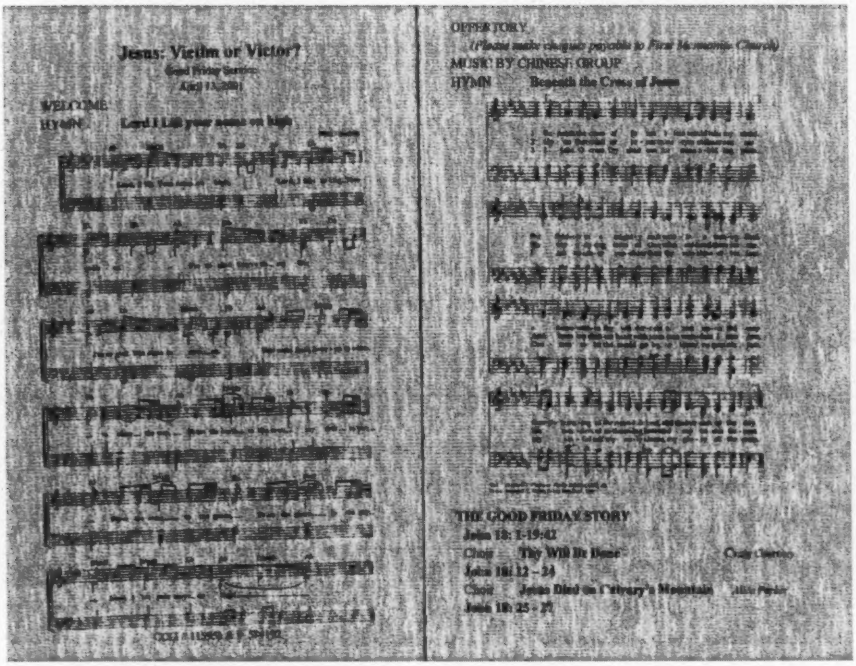
## "Lord I Lift Your Name," Musical Notation, and Amplification

"Lord I Lift Your Name" is sung as part of the choruses at Holyrood Mennonite Church, and appears in the chorus book there; it would also be familiar to River West Christian Church. In both of these cases, the song is presented either in a book or on an overhead as a song text; participants learn the music by ear and then sing along. This chorus was the only congregational song on the program which was not chosen from the *Hymnal*; though it is not a hymn, in the program it was called a hymn.

The musical notation here presents an interesting discourse of situational insidership. As I noted in chapter six, the modes of teaching and transmission associated with genres can make them accessible or inaccessible to a participant. For a person who has grown up learning choruses by ear, musical notation may make it more difficult to learn a piece. On the other hand, the opposite is true for someone who has grown up learning music by reading music—it can be much more difficult to learn something by ear.

Given that the largest single group of people attending the service was from First Mennonite Church, and that groups from many other Mennonite churches—including Lendrum Mennonite Brethren Church ("parent" church of River West Christian Church) and Holyrood Mennonite Church—also grow up reading music, this way of presenting the piece made sense in the context of facilitating participation in the service.

The choice to do this repertoire does represent an attempt on the part of



Jesus: Victim or Victor?
Good Friday Service
April 13, 2001

WELCOME
HYMN Lord I Lift your name on high

OFFERTORY
(Please make cheques payable to First Mennonite Church)
MUSIC BY CHINESE GROUP
HYMN Beneath the Cross of Jesus

THE GOOD FRIDAY STORY
John 18: 1-19:42
Choir Thy Will Be Done Craig Courtney
John 18: 12 – 24
Choir Jesus Died on Calvary's Mountain Alice Parker
John 18: 25 - 27

Figure 7.2: Photograph of Good Friday Service Program

the musicians of the event to represent and satisfy the needs of River West Christian Church, and the other Mennonite churches of Edmonton who practice contemporary worship music. However, the mode of performance of the chorus and the description of it as a "hymn" will no doubt have seemed idiosyncratic to members of River West who attended the service.

Furthermore, the sound of the chorus was quite different from that of typical chorus performances at Holyrood Mennonite and River West in that the sound of the worship band was very quiet. I talked with the guitarists—one of whom was from River West, the other from First Mennonite, after the service. The River West musician seemed disappointed in the service: he said "they didn't have the amplifier on... I asked [the other guitarist], we both wanted to play for more of the songs, but our amplifier was off after the first song."

This most likely represented a simple mistake on the part of the sound person. However, it is an oversight which a participant at River West or Holyrood, a church which practices contemporary worship music, in other words, would be unlikely to make.

### 7.5.3 The Chinese Choir and Mennonite Ethnicity

The Chinese Mennonite Church is strongly related to other Mennonite churches of this study particularly in its origins and through the shared context of Edmonton's inter-Mennonite institutions. The congregation originated in response to the arrival of East Asian refugees in Edmonton in the 1980s (Epp, 1998 (1989)). The congregation was initially a church plant by Edmonton's Mennonite churches, including First Mennonite Church, Holyrood Mennonite Church and Lendrum Mennonite Brethren Church, which is the parent congregation of River West Christian Church, through the shared institution of Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, a refugee resettlement agency (Voth, 2000). The congregation first met in the Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, but later on purchased a church building for which it raised its own funds and also received funds from various Mennonite institutions and from the other Mennonite churches of Edmonton. The congregation was led at its beginnings by a Chinese pastor couple, and a new Chinese pastor couple now leads the congregation.

While the congregation does not hold membership in a national Mennonite conference, it relates to the other Mennonite churches of Edmonton organizationally through the ministerial. Most members are East Asian, many of them relatively recent immigrants for whom English is unfamiliar. The language of worship is Chinese. While the congregation is thus strongly connected to other Mennonite churches of Edmonton, its ethnic difference from the Mennonite churches of this study is pronounced and is part and parcel with its initial purpose: to provide a church home for Asian immigrants to Edmonton.

I wondered in retrospect what it might have been like if the presentation of the two choirs in the service, the Chinese choir and the inter-Mennonite choir, had been reversed—introducing and contextualizing the choir pieces which the Western choir did as "special music," while the Chinese church choir provided the main choral repertoire. Others could have been invited to join the Chinese choir as well. Of course, the majority of attendees of the service were not Chinese Mennonites, and thus such an arrangement would be impractical considering the singing and language backgrounds of most members.

The difficulty of imagining this situation illustrates the ethnically situated nature of the musical practices of both Mennonite groups, the Chinese Mennonite group and the Russian Mennonite practice of choral singing. The position of the Chinese choir's music was relatively marginal, in that it was marked as "special music," unlike the inter-Mennonite choir's music which was a central and functional part of the service outlined in the service's bulletin. This is not to say that the Chinese Mennonite contribution to the service was not highly valued, nor that the Russian and Swiss Mennonite practice of Western hymns and choral music must needs be ethnocentric and exclusive.

However, it is to say that there are limits to the real ethnic portability which is sometimes assumed to be part of congregational singing from the

*Hymnal* and other repertoires drawing on world musics. While the imagined community of global Mennonites embodied in singing the world hymns in the *Hymnal* is important, its actual physical embodiment in any particular church is not a reality.

## 7.6 Feedback from Church Members concerning the Good Friday Service

Feedback concerning this service is usually informal. Members of the various churches discuss the service in the theatre's foyer following the event, and conversations evaluating and reading the service become part of informal discussions among members of each church in the coming year.

After the service described above, I talked with several attendees from each church and inquired further during interviews with members of each church concerning the service, and the musical contributions of each church. Responses to these questions included many critical responses evaluating the music of other churches.

It is worth highlighting that, when churches other than First Mennonite have sponsored the service, the music has been different and has expressed the generic tastes of that particular church. For example, when Holyrood led the service in 2000, I was the songleader and performed some of the songs a capella, unlike the First Mennonite Church performances of the songs with piano; in addition. choruses and a worship band featured more prominently in the 2000 Good Friday service. Participants who attended the 2001 Good Friday service had also attended other Good Friday services, and in interviews concerning the 2001 service cited the services of other years both in support of their placement of their own churches musical style versus that of the other churches, and in support of the value of these services for expressing a common Mennonite identity.

The following sections present responses of each church to the 2001 Good

Friday service, and other years of the service attended by participants, and to the genres of music practiced by the other churches.

### 7.6.1 First Mennonite Responses

The inter-Mennonite Good Friday service is important to First Mennonite; many participants mentioned it as both an important performance occasion for the choir and something which they valued highly as an expression of inter-Mennonite connections.

#### First Mennonite's choirs and contribution to the service

When I asked participants about the music of this service, they placed First Mennonite as the most connected to a Mennonite tradition of music, especially choral singing. One participant placed First's musical efforts in the context of other churches who have lost their musical traditions: "They also work hard on, they don't want to lose the music traditions that the Mennonite churches have had, which I believe is, that's just what I hear, that some churches have really lost a lot of the traditional Mennonite singing..." Another participant gave the following account:

> *J*: Do you participate in the inter-Mennonite Good Friday service, and if so, what kind of comparisons come to mind with the music of First and the other churches that are there?
>
> *S*: What a question! I hope you put down, "and then she laughed!" ...we're the only church with a choir...the other churches don't have active choir programs...for people who love to sing, it's just sad...if I wasn't playing for choir I'd be singing in choir. That's just how it would be!

Many participants noted that First Mennonite often has a strong role in organizing the service, even on years when they are not the "host" or sponsoring church of the event. Some participants suggested that this was due to the strong role which the inter-Mennonite choir often takes in the service; since First Mennonite is the only Mennonite church in Edmonton with an active choir program, they contribute in a leadership role to the choral part of this service.

## Other Churches, Choruses, and Living with Differences

Many participants expressed dislike concerning the popular music practiced at other churches. When I asked one participant about the church music she prefers, she brought up the Good Friday service, and placed First Mennonite relative to the popular music led by other churches at the service: "What don't I like? . . . I guess I can think of the inter-Mennonite services when we had the worship team and the choruses, the "off-the-wall" type stuff, that does not [fit my preferences]."

Several participants suggested that First Mennonite was reticent to lead choruses at the service compared to the Mennonite Brethren churches:

> We sort of do our, this was our year, we're the host and we did our token, a couple of praise songs, but that's not what we want to do, because it's not our church's style. When Lendrum [hosts the service], and River West, and whoever else helps out, the MB ones, that then certainly the whole praise band thing is going on, and certainly they like to rock it up a little bit more. Really, they do.

Another participant suggested that Holyrood was also sometimes seen as "a guitars and drums and electric piano [church]," not on the same musical page as First Mennonite Church.

However, most participants also felt willing to participate in the chorus singing in the context of the Good Friday service, since this was important to other churches participating in the event. One participant characterized this relationship simply: "We live with our differences." Inter-Mennonite fellowship was important enough to accommodate differences in church music practice; at the same time, the service offered an opportunity for members to define their church music practices versus that of the other churches.

### 7.6.2 River West Responses

River West's participation in the Good Friday service was seen as relatively tentative, both by members of the church and by members of other churches. This was most frequently seen as due to the church's ethnic diversity, and to its practice of popular music rather than hymns.

#### An Ethnic Gathering

An older ethnic Mennonite member of River West told me that generally River West's members don't attend because they are not of ethnic Mennonite background and thus lack a desire to get together with other Mennonites. He sums it up, "They do not need the same fellowship."[3]

His statement reflected the views of most participants whom I interviewed who were not of ethnic Mennonite background; these members generally did not attend the service and sometimes attributed it to their background being other than Mennonite.

However, one young member, not of ethnic Mennonite background, felt that inter-religious connections with Mennonites were the most important thing about the Good Friday service for her: "I think the coolest thing about the service, maybe why I think I want to go so badly every year is that it represents unity amongst the Mennonite churches in Edmonton, despite all our difference." Another young member similarly answered: "It's good to meet with other Mennonite churches and have one joined church service. It gives a feeling of unity."

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[3] One member suggested that there is a history of very tenuous connections even between this particular church and other Mennonite Brethren churches. For example, this participant told me, until recently the church didn't have a budget item for even contributing to the Mennonite Brethren conference either at the provincial or national level. This attitude, he felt, was being changed through contact with other urban, mission-minded Mennonite Brethren churches.

### Choruses versus Choral Music

Most participants I interviewed who were of ethnic Mennonite background did attend the service, but in general felt at odds with its mode of music and worship. Several members of River West commented on the practice of choral singing at other churches associated with the Good Friday service, versus River West's practice of choruses rather than choirs and hymns. One church leader critiqued the service's music in a particularly sharp manner:

> River West Christian Church music is preferred, more life like, self expressive, lively and yet also subdued, more free and unrestrained... [At the Good Friday service] I have yet to experience fully enjoyable, participatory worship music. I recall that all the guest speakers were very good and the drama good. The choral music and congregational music definitely needs improving change, in particular the choral music.

Some participants suggested that their preference for the church music at River West was due to its differences from more "traditional" church music which they had experienced as a child. One young mother felt that the contemporary style of music at River West, even in the performance of hymns in this style, lent worship a freedom which was new to her and a gift to her children.

> I love the contemporary style and the freedom we have to worship. It's really the first time I've felt that kind of freedom of expression. I love the fact that they have introduced hymns in a contemporary style. I'd love my children to learn the good old hymns and know them not as a drudgery.

On the other hand, an older member of the congregation felt that choral music is one area where River West has backslid. He expressed a wish for a choir at River West and a belief that at some point one will be started. This member suggested that a choir would add an important diversity to the music practiced at River West. A young member of the church, who attended during the time of the musical transition from hymns to choruses, also expressed regret that choral music is no longer practiced at River West: "I would love to step away from the choruses of typical styles that we so often sing. The words of choral music are often amazing and maybe that is something that I miss at River West."

A member of the leadership team expressed a similar sentiment: positive feelings about choirs and choral music, although this leader did not feel that these types of music are presently lacking at River West: the music practice at River West is "a different form but the important part is being upheld...that God is praised."

### 7.6.3 Holyrood Responses

Holyrood's musical practices, combining both hymns and choruses, lent it a particular position in the Good Friday service as a linchpin of ethnicities and musical styles. Members and leaders expressed appreciation for the inter-Mennonite fellowship represented by the service, and furthermore an understanding that Holyrood's musical practice formed a "bridge" between the musical practices of other churches at the service.

#### How Churches See The Musical Practices of Others

Interviewees from Holyrood expressed in a more explicit manner than interviewees from other churches a sense of the way which other churches see musical practices other than their own. For example, one member described her prior church's musical practice, which was focussed on choruses, as follows: "There they see the hymns the way, let's say First, looks at choruses..."

Other members expressed an awareness of the reluctance of some Mennonite Brethren churches to practice choral music and hymns as part of the Good Friday service. These responses were not evaluations of the choice of genre at other churches, but rather an evaluation of their openness to multiple genres.

**Holyrood's Inclusivity**

One participant expressed the idea that the inclusivity of Holyrood in terms of music genres is a particular feature which identifies it versus other Edmonton Mennonite churches:

> ... [Some] people draw the line too soon, they're like, we're not going to have choruses because we think they're wrong, or something. And I don't appreciate that, because, it's, like you have a right to have a preference, but don't belittle another music style in the process. Some churches, I've talked to people from their churches... it feels like the whole congregation... won't incorporate something new, and when they do, to hear some of their responses, and how negative it is, but this speaks to somebody, and it's fair that it doesn't speak to you, but be careful how you say this doesn't speak to me, because if you just say it's [useless], well that's not true.

## 7.7 Conclusions Concerning the Good Friday Service

### 7.7.1 The Completeness of a Church as Musical System

As was suggested by my observations concerning music which was performed by members of one church and its reception by members of another church, each church's musical system is relatively complete and different from that of each other church in the study. Modes of performance, such as the use of amplified guitars for choruses, and roles associated with music, such as

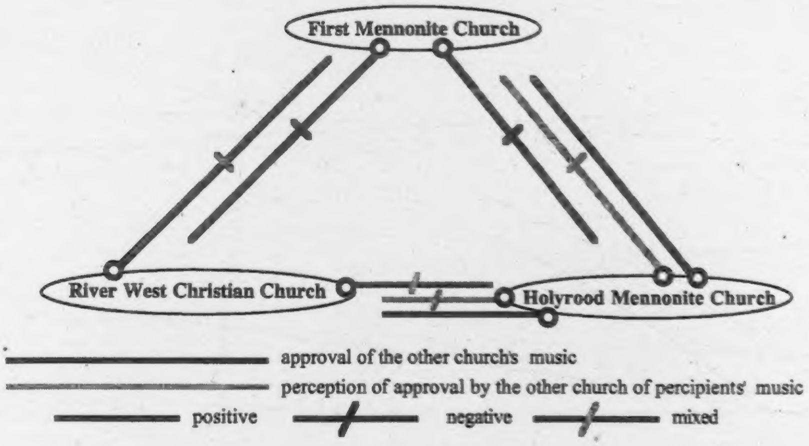
First Mennonite Church
River West Christian Church
Holyrood Mennonite Church
approval of the other church's music
perception of approval by the other church of percipients' music
positive
negative
mixed

Figure 7.3: Chart of Perceptions of Music Between the Churches

the role of conductor as songleader, fit into a genre-related musical system which functions within a church. However, when deployed in performances between churches these modes of performance and socio-musical roles resulted in misunderstandings or idiosyncratic interpretations of particular pieces or performances.

### 7.7.2 Churches of the Inter-Mennonite Service as Contexts for Identity

As was shown by the observations offered by members of each church concerning the music of other churches, the Good Friday service is a place in which each Mennonite church is a context for each other's identity. Each church used each other church's musical practice as a sounding board for their own identity.

Figure 7.3 introduces perceptions of music between the churches. This chart is based on interview data rather than a statistical survey, and thus should be seen as representative of the views of members of each church with a possible rather than definite connection to the views of the church as a whole. In the chart, lines begin at each church and move toward each other church. A black line represents approval of the other church's music. A grey line represents a perception that the other church approves of the percipient's music.

As is shown here, interviewees from each church represented a different pattern of musical "placement" of their church vis a vis the others. A negative response to the practice of contemporary music at Holyrood Mennonite Church and at River West, and a strong approval for its own practice of choral music and hymnody characterized First Mennonite Church's placement of its own musical practices versus those of other churches. Mixed responses concerning the other church's musical practice, particularly mixed positive and negative responses to choral music and hymns, and a strong approval for its own contemporary music practice characterized River West's placement of itself versus these churches. Lastly, Holyrood Mennonite Church perceived the musical practices of other churches as positive, and approved of its own blending of these musical practices; however, Holyrood Mennonite Church also saw the other churches as less open to the elements of its musical practices which differed from those of each particular other church.

In summary, different patterns of approval, and particularly of rejection by each church of other church's musical practices show that musical genres provide one way in which these Mennonite churches negotiate their own identity within the context of other Mennonite churches.

### 7.7.3 Inter-Mennonite Community

What makes the processes of differentiation of identity within this service particularly complex and interesting is that it highlights the extent to which group identities are complex and multiply identified: while each church becomes the context for each others' identity, at the same time the churches gather because they are affirming an identity held in common and expressed through corporate worship, though through different and contested repertoires of music.

A middle-aged attendee from River West expressed surprise that, in my own experience in Winnipeg, as I told him, there were not inter-Mennonite gatherings involving Mennonite Brethren and Mennonite Church Canada congregations, and talked to me about how good it felt to worship together. First Mennonite Church and Holyrood Mennonite Church members also valued the service greatly. Most persons whom I talked with about the service, both after this service and more generally in the context of the interviews, stated that the value of the service, for them, was in the fellowship with other Mennonite groups, across differences. These responses frequently came from the same people who criticized the musical practices of other churches in the context of the service.

For myself as a Mennonite scholar, this was an important insight: music is central to the construction of a shared identity between Mennonite groups, in that to some extent Mennonites of many different types can and do perform music together as the primary worship ritual in inter-Mennonite gatherings. However, feelings and reflections on musical style then subsequently affect musical practices at local Mennonite churches and become a way of expressing a particular Mennonite identity, that is, for example, reinforcing a commitment to hymn-singing and its connection to the "First Mennonite Church" identity, versus the practices of other churches.

# Chapter 8

# Conclusions

As is suggested by the ethnographic observations of the previous chapter, music is key to the social life of the individual churches of this study because it sets up internal social structures (i.e. organizational structures and activities) which are important to social life, and because it sets up systems of meanings and value which are important to the group. Music is also important to the identity of each church group through its perceived value as belonging to a particular genre, as seen by each other church group.

The following are concluding reflections in dialogue with theories introduced in the first three chapters, concerning the three key theoretical themes of this dissertation: music's connection to identity via the multiply identified individual, music's contribution to social structures in a group and thus to identity within the group, and musical genre's relationship to group identity. I will also summarize the implications of this study for music's importance to the Mennonite churches of Edmonton, in light of these theoretical themes. Finally, I will reflect on the role of insider fieldwork in shaping the content and conclusions of this study.

## 8.1 Concerning Theories of Identity and Music

### 8.1.1 Multiple Identities / The Individual

In chapter three I argued that most Mennonite studies and ethnomusicological identity studies tend to focus on group membership of some kind in the singular as the most important aspect of identity; for Mennonite studies, this is usually considered to be either ethnic identity or religious identity. However, I proposed that for this ethnography an important premise was that identities are composed of multiple registers of identity (rather than identity as a simple primary and singular product of group membership) deployed socially by individuals.

The most articulate spokesperson for this point of view in terms of music and identity has been Timothy Rice. Rice argues that the individual is the appropriate starting point for discussions of music and identity:

> When individual experience is made the locus of investigation, the notion that music reflects culture largely disappears. In its place, we find individuals acting on or through music, acting musically, as it were, to constitute themselves socially and assign meaning to their experience (Rice, 1996, 300).

These arguments dovetail with Ruth Glasser's concept of ethnic identity as "one of a range of identities that people can hold simultaneously or successively" (Glasser, 1995, 195). For a group such as the Mennonites, in which several registers of identity, including at least religious identity and ethnic identity, are important and vary from individual to individual, these concepts provide a flexible model with which to account for musical practices relationship to identity.

In the course of my interviews I found Mennonite individuals characterizing their identity and music in terms of many different registers of identity, beyond either religious or ethnic associations, including gender, institutional affiliations, jobs, family history, et cetera. Music tied in to these various registers in terms of sources of repertoire and influences on performers. Worship leaders and music leaders at each church cited connections through some group with which they identified, often other than church or ethnicity, which provided them with repertoire or with ideas for performance. For example, one worship team leader cited his children's connections at their evangelical school as the primary source of new choruses which he led.

Rice suggests that the experiences which result from these musical choices will be understood in terms of the person's own experience, that is, memory, and in terms of the extension of that memory backwards via a sense of history. Similarly, Regula Qureshi (2000) has argued that musical instruments mean through their associations with memory, in the experiences of individuals listening but also in the context of more broadly held understandings of tradition.

In the case of my fieldwork, diverse and personal identifiers linked to memory and music were discussed in terms of enabling worship through music: for example, because one individual remembered their grandmother playing and singing hymns with them at the piano, though they were not ethnically Mennonite, Mennonite hymn singing was a home-coming for them which they claimed as their own and through which they worshipped.

Worship through music, particularly choruses in the contexts of River West and Holyrood, was often seen as individual to the point of being uncommunicable with others; one worship leader suggested that though it was very important for him to worship as he led others in worship, it was impossible for the congregation to understand his individual state of worship.

> It's an individual thing, your heart's, nobody else knows what your heart's like when your singing in worship. But it's not just an individual thing, like when I'm standing next to you, and all of a sudden harmonizing and it sounds good, it's a different feeling that

> floods over you. So it's not just an individual thing really either. You can be blessed by the guy next to you! Or by the people up front!

In other words, such feelings of worship, though internal, were seen as motivating external behavior in individuals so that participants were often inspired and performed differently due to the activity of the person singing next to them. Similarly, several pianists who led singing at First Mennonite also described "singing" the words of the hymns internally as they played them, so that the feeling and interpretation of the hymns individually and internally contributed directly to their external performance of the hymn.

### 8.1.2 Music's Relationship to Social Structures and Identity Within a Group

In chapter three, I suggested that both Mennonite studies and much ethnomusicological literature conceived of music's relationship to identity as primarily mediated through *representation*. I argued that, for this thesis, an important premise would be the understanding of music as a social practice which forms identities as such.

Jane Sugarman has presented a similar position, characterizing musical practice as a Bordieuian habitus: an organic part of social life, which forms persons as social entities (as part of a network of socialization processes) as well as forming communities, and being formed by those people and communities (Sugarman, 1997, 1989). Music is not simply homology or superstructure, but a dialectical part of social processes and social structure.

Timothy Rice's model continues with the argument that the musical choices of individuals will take place in a cultural context: that is, a shared sense of the meaning of these choices will both allow others to understand such choices and restrict the range of individual choices. If the person identifies with a group one likely choice will be to use music to "give meaning and life to their group" (Rice, 1996, 301).

| *General* | *First Choral* | *First Congregational* | *River West* | *Holyrood Hymn* | *Holyrood Chorus* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| music leader | choir leader | worship leader | worship leader | song leader | worship team leader |
| | | pastor | pastor | pastor or preacher | |
| accompanist or team member | pianist | accompanist | worship team member | accompanist | worship team member |
| | choir member | | sound person | | |
| congreg. member | congreg. member | congreg. member | congreg. member | congreg. member | congreg. member |
| | | | committee member | | |

Table 8.1: Roles Comparison

In the context of my fieldwork, I found that individuals acted to create meaning within the group by contributing to and within musical social structures, such as choirs, quartets and worship bands. At each church, I found that the processes of learning music and the performance standards and genres of music create a shared musical language of insider practices which are comprehensible within a group. These musical practices are, as the Mennonite example so strongly foregrounds, the everyday social practice of the church as such.

The extent to which musical practice allows for different social formations in a church is illustrated by Table 8.1, which compares key roles in the generic format I suggested in chapter one, and the actual collection of roles found at each congregation. Table 8.2 compares key processes found at each church.

While the churches correspond to a general pattern, in which key roles include some kind of songleader, instrumentalist, and congregational members, and key processes include repertoire gathering, rehearsals, performances (worship), and feedback, the specifics of these roles and processes at each church

| *General* | *First Choral* | *First Congregational* | *River West* | *Holyrood Hymn* | *Holyrood Chorus* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| repertoire gathering | repertoire gathering | repertoire gathering | repertoire gathering | repertoire gathering | repertoire gathering |
| rehearsal | weekly rehearsal | plan performance | worship service planning | plan hymn performance | weekly rehearsal |
|  |  |  | weekly rehearsals |  |  |
| Sunday worship and performance | Sunday worship and performance | Sunday worship and performance | Sunday worship and performance | Sunday worship and performance | Sunday worship and performance |
| feedback | feedback | feedback | feedback | feedback | feedback |

Table 8.2: Processes Comparison

are quite different.

No church has the same amount or variety of roles which are key to their musical processes. For Holyrood and First Mennonite church, there are two groups of key roles and processes since there are two parallel musical practices which function together in the worship service. Choirs as practiced at First Mennonite and choruses as practiced at Holyrood and River West Mennonite Church seem to involve more participants who are not congregational singers than do hymns; however, hymn performances hinge more on the performance of congregational participants. Each genre enables broad involvement in music within each congregation but congregational members are involved in different capacities.

Different demographics connect to the roles at each church. For example, all worship leaders and most worship team members at River West were young adults, a fact valued by church members as representing the continuing vitality of the church in the current generation of youth. On the other hand, the choirs at First Mennonite church were organized by age-grades, with adult participation in the senior choir being seen by many participants as the fullest participation in choral ministry at First Mennonite Church.

Repertoire selection and performance is performed by a different party at each church. At Holyrood Mennonite Church, for example, hymn selection is co-operatively done by the pastor and songleader, who performs the songs, while choruses are selected by the chorus leader who performs the songs. At First Mennonite church, the worship leader selects the songs, but the pianist in fact leads them in performance. At River West, the worship leader helps to construct the entire service, including the songs, with the pastor, and then also performs these songs.

The repertoire itself is conditioned by the wider social networks of the church: the broader religious group of Mennonites, Mennonite Brethren or evangelicals has influence over the repertoire chosen by placing hymns in a hymnal and or exercising dollars and opinions in the Christian contemporary music marketplace. Individuals within particular congregations choose music from these options, which contributes to a tradition of frequently selected music, if not a fully formed canon, at their church. Thus the repertoire selected at each church is not only dependent on the individual who selects these musics, or the canon local to a church, but also upon the networks in which the genre of choice is involved.

Different processes are important to different genres. Chorus groups and choirs at all three churches require regular rehearsals in order to perform well. Co-ordination between the worship leader and pastor and pianist are key to the performance of hymns at First Mennonite and Holyrood Mennonite Church. The point of these comparisons is that musical practice is a key part of social structure at each church, and so by choosing different genres of music, each church chooses to structure its weekly social life and worship differently.

Such musical structures came to matter in terms of identity within the churches I studied in two ways. First, group social structures can be a variable of (a register of) identity for an individual. For example, individuals in the choir at First Mennonite Church identified with the group as their "place" in church: for many, it was an important smaller community within the larger context of First Mennonite, and also an outlet for their own personal contribution to First Mennonite's corporate worship. In other words, individuals come to see themselves as and be seen as "choir members."

Secondly, such structures of musical subgroups and individuals within a church were claimed by the entire church as an aspect of its identity. To continue with the example of First Mennonite Church, most worshippers understood the choir as an important part of the church which reflected on the church's identity, i.e. "we are a church which has a choir, a definitive aspect of our worship." Individuals participate in musical structures, which are part of individual identity, and through those structures music becomes a part of group identity.

### 8.1.3 Musical genre's role in group identity

I have also suggested that, at least in the North American context, musical social structures and values help to identify groups versus other groups because they are conceived of in terms of genre both by the group and others. As I suggested in chapter three, my usage of "genre" in this thesis, while it is not an uncommon usage of the term in popular music studies, is somewhat unusual for ethnomusicological studies.

I argued that, while ethnomusicology offers sophisticated tools for the analysis of music's production, transmission and reception within a group, and the differentiation of multiple levels or different kinds of insiders within a group, for the present study, popular music studies offered a better theoretical understanding of music's significance as it circulates *between* groups. Recent ethnomusicological work has not ignored the movement of world music between groups and the changes in significance which it undergoes (Erlmann, 1996a,b; Taylor, 1997; Stokes, 1994b). Here, genre is an aspect of the way music travels: for example, Meintjes (1990) notes that the isicathamiya music of Ladysmith Black Mambazo, because it fits into a Western concept of a "world music" genre, becomes a seamless part of Simon's *Graceland.* Genre is understood as a part of global music's mediation, commercialization and ultimately its idiosyncratic receptions and uses here in the West.

However, ethnomusicological works focus on groups which are far apart, both geographically and in terms of their self-understanding. Both this dissertation and popular music studies, on the other hand, focus on groups with enough common background that they are a context for each others identity. This is not to say that South African musicians and North American popular music fans are not a context for each others identity, but rather that their connection is more abstract than is that of the groups which I am discussing or those popular music studies has commonly studied.

In contrast, Simon Frith (1996), a central figure writing on genre in popular music, has argued that disagreements about the "value" of popular music, held between various individuals and groups of fans, *create* genre as a value system aligned with a taste group. In other words, aesthetic categorizations based on formal and technical, semiotic, behavioral, and commercial rules, are arrived at in part through disagreement and debate between various taste groups. These disagreements both help to constitute the groups as social groups, and to form genres as specific aesthetic and performative musical formations related to these social groups. However, genres through associations with particular groups of people allow for outsiders to enter into identities (such as "African" or "gay") through interacting with their musics, and at the same time deconstruct these identities, since anyone can access them through the popular (Frith, 1996, 273-274).

Similarly, Adam Krims (2000, 2) argues that "the sonic organization of rap music... is directly and profoundly implicated in rap's cultural workings... especially in the formation of identities." Because broader popular discourse concerning rap music has created a vocabulary of place-based genre, Atlanta's Tha Goodie MoB is able to draw on musical tropes associated with the American South and articulate a "Southern" identity in a rap song (Krims, 2000, 126-7). Krims (2000, 200) reflects that musical poetics, defined through popular discourses, form a level of mediation between geography, identity, and culture. While rap may seem distant from the church musics of this study, broad understandings of genre held by the churches of this study allow for characterizations of the identity of a church due to its affiliation with a genre, for example, a connection between worship using popular music, and the language used to describe this music (or "discourse about this music"), and evangelical identity.

To summarize, in these theories of genre, genres are socially constructed sign systems and sites of musical practices which matter between groups in ways related to group identity. This concept of genre, both in terms of genre's construction in social discourse and its relationship to identity was reflected in my research. Concepts of genre were nuanced and constructed through social discourse in each church. For example, generic terms differed somewhat between the churches. While Holyrood Mennonite Church participants called their popular music practices "choruses," River West participants called similar practices "contemporary worship music." While First Mennonite church participants called their music "hymns," River West participants called such practices "traditional." The concept and experience of worship was often used by participants in evaluations of genres: "I find this genre worshipful, but not that genre."

In other words, in this research, genres also connected with particular vocabularies, repertoires of descriptive phrases and evaluatory comments. While "worship" was a key phrase which was salient across genres, other phrases were specific to a genre system. For example, I noted in chapter 6 that "theology" and "text" were most often key values in discussing hymns at Holyrood, aligned with the idea of "depth" or "tradition." On the other hand, choruses were celebrated at both Holyrood and River West for their contemporary nature, for their "relevance," conceived in terms of time.

It seems likely, then, that these repertoires of vocabularies and ways of thinking about musical genre are shaped by broader discourses concerning the genre, just as the collections of roles and of musical repertoires associated with genres are shaped by these discourses. In retrospect, this vocabulary is a topic which deserved more attention in the interviews I pursued, and it is certainly a topic worthy of further research. However, it is possible to draw a preliminary contrast between the broader discourse represented by talk about choruses and talk about hymns: choruses are part of a mediated cultural economy not unlike other parts of the music industry, and hymns, for Mennonites, are connected to the group's colleges, which are patterned after conservatories and schools of music.

Both Keith Negus (1999) and Adam Krims (2000) have outlined a picture of interactions between industry, musicians, intermediaries and media, which would include not only mediated music but also forums such as magazines or web sites, and audiences, whereby understandings of genre and talk about them is continually negotiated and re-negotiated. Simon Frith (1996) has emphasized the value of fashion, of newness, in this popular discourse, and also of transcendent experience; such values certainly figure in to talk about choruses, with associated values of contemporariness and enablement of worship. Christian music in the contexts in which I studied is celebrated precisely for its mass appeal as well, being seen as open to and inviting participation by all, an attractive feature for an evangelical church. This is interesting in that the music itself is both a form of worship and a kind of marketing for the church, seen as opening the church to many people by opening the church to popular discourses.

On the other hand, Leo Driedger (1999, 183-186) has pointed out that Mennonite colleges remain salient to Mennonite identity, though they struggle to retain this salient position. I would note that the pattern at most Canadian Mennonite colleges has been to emphasize two major subject areas: theology and music. Though in the U.S., Mennonite colleges have developed with a broader scope of subject areas, which is currently the trend in Canada as well, music has remained a central interest of the colleges and choir tours in particular a key way in which they relate to their constituent churches. Music at the colleges has by and large been patterned on the school of music or conservatory model, which has been examined by Bruno Nettl (1995) and Henry Kingsbury (1988). Both have pointed out the centrality of a lineage of tradition among musicians (Nettl 1995, 68-72; Kingsbury 1988, 35), and Nettl (1995, 40-42) has emphasized the semi-religious association of composers with supernatural genius, a value to which I might add depth or profundity.

Certainly, differences exist between the conservatory systems described by Nettl and Kingsbury and the Mennonite schools, in particular the centrality of the choir, conducting and singing at Mennonite schools. Nettl (1995, 122-124) does point out the "choral paradigm" as approximating a family structure of relationships at his fictional conservatory; this idea has salience in Mennonite churches which practice hymnody and was cited by participants at First Mennonite who were connected to the Mennonite colleges. Not only were the values of tradition, depth and greatness associated with hymns and classical music, but also the idea that choral singing in parts embodied a uniquely Mennonite kind of community, either non-hierarchical or with an obscure and shifting hierarchy, where everyone has their part in worship.

Aspects of genre were sometimes used by insiders to value the group and by outsiders to discredit the group. For example, the quality of an affect of love for God in contemporary worship music was celebrated by some participants at both Holyrood Mennonite and River West and at the same time satirized by First Mennonite participants, some of whom termed the music "Jesus-is-my-boyfriend music." That is, qualities associated with genres were both understood and redefined by participants in the various churches.

As I argued in chapter seven, through an examination of the churches' joint performance in and responses from each church to the Good Friday service, each church functions as a context for each other church's identity because they understand each others musical practices as different genres. Each church participated in broader discourses concerning meaning and identity as it relates to musical genre.

For Mennonites in particular, musical practice, and shared understandings of music genres both contribute to and help solve a problem of identity. As the historical survey of chapter two posited, after 1960, the increase in diversity in the Mennonite church and in musical styles available to the Mennonites created a complication of identity, at least from the perspective of insiders, in which "a multitude of practices search for a theology" (Rempel, 2000). Theology, as one of the main points of reference for the Mennonites, adds another degree to this complication of identity by maintaining that the Mennonites are a religious group, as Mennonite studies often sees it, not an ethnic group. Thus the group sees itself as "transcultural" or poly-cultural, providing multiple points of reference for cultural identity and practice such as music. The question becomes, for example: who are we, Holyrood Mennonite church, within this polyphony of voices? And then, who are we, Mennonites?

The ethnographic narrative of this thesis has argued that music can also help to navigate this complex identity both at the level of a congregation within the broader Mennonite world and for the Mennonites as a larger group. Firstly, for the Mennonite congregations of Edmonton, the choice of genre allows each church to place itself vis a vis other groups which share theological and social characteristics (of "imagined histories"), and against groups which differ in some of these characteristics (such as ethnic characteristics, for instance River West's poly-ethnicity versus First Mennonite's dominant Russian Mennonite heritage). In other words, a church can find its identity niche within Mennonite diversity in part through its use of musical genre. A polyphony of voices allows for individual placement if a genre system is well enough understood that an individual group can use it as such.

Let me point out that in order for music to function as it does among the churches of Edmonton, the dilemma of music genres cannot be resolved completely. The tension between different genres is productive for identity within and between churches. If it is lost, some other debate will take its place concerning identity.

Secondly, however, musical practice can still be shared between groups with different musics. There is some overlap of musical practice, background, and repertoire between even the most divergent of Mennonite groups, such as the singing of the same hymns on admittedly rare occasions between First Mennonite and River West demonstrates. The icon of singing for Mennonites is an important identifying factor for the group as a whole. This was emphasized for me recently in a lecture by a prominent non-Mennonite scholar of hymns, who mentioned the influence of Mennonites on her understanding of hymns: "When you ask a Mennonite why they sing," she said, "they will say, We sing because we are Mennonites. We are Mennonites because we sing."

In other words, the *practice* of music as a group at conferences or joint worship gatherings is an important key to the construction of the group as a whole group. Julia Kasdorf (1997, 185), a Mennonite poet and literary critic has argued that by expressing divergent identities, such as traditional Mennonite versus contemporary woman, in a single poem, the Mennonite poet "gives form to chaos; even as she poses the question, she shows herself whole." Similarly, by performing multiple genres *together* at the Good Friday service, for example, a collection of musically divergent Mennonite churches perform as a single Mennonite group, worshipping together.

I am not suggesting that music is the only factor determining a Mennonite identity crisis or its solution, but rather that the case of the Mennonite churches of Edmonton suggests that music is important and pertinent to both. Furthermore, the commonality in history of musical practices from 1960 on between Mennonites and other Christian Protestants and the overlap of Mennonites with these other groups, such as evangelicals, as I outlined in chapter two, might suggest that the patterns of identity complication and resolution in musical practice could be generalized to other Western Christian religious groups from 1960 until the present.

This study, though it concerns music which is not often seen as popular music, does focus on several groups (or multiple sites) which share musical practices and understandings and a common North American urban context. The similarity of discourse concerning musical genre here to those described by popular-music studies focussed on genre highlights the extent to which a shared Western urban backdrop shapes the questions and answers which ethnographic study entails. My choosing to focus on several closely related sites and several related groups has resulted in an analysis of genre's productive relationship to group identity which parallels popular-music studies which are situated in a relatively similar environment, an environment which differs from that of much ethnomusicological fieldwork.

Nonetheless, I have argued that a related understanding of genre has to some extent been profitably applied by ethnomusicology on a global scale, and could be applied to ethnomusicological work focussed on multiple communities in the West or to inter-related sites in the non-West. As I have tried to show in this study, the broader adoption of such a concept within ethnomusicology could add flexibility and strength to the ability of the ethnomusicologist to account for the role of groups and individuals in forming musical practices, and in forming identities through their participation in these musical practices and associated discourses.

## 8.2 Conclusions Concerning Insider Research

As I noted in chapter one, insider research is not the norm for ethnomusicology, though a growing body of insider work does exist. In the present study, being an insider has posed both advantages and problems for me as fieldworker and ethnographer. Insider research has been criticized for not having an acceptable factor of "strangeness" or difference between the researcher and the researched, thus not providing for the unique insights which an outsider can bring. However, in pursuing fieldwork I found significant differences between my own history of musical practice as a Mennonite church musician, and music as it was practiced and understood in each church.

As a Russian Mennonite, I closely connected to musical practice at First Mennonite, and yet I found certain local traditions to be quite new and different to what I had experienced elsewhere, such as the practice of leading songs from the piano. As a classically trained musician I was an outsider to Christian contemporary music as it was practiced at River West and Holyrood Mennonite Church. Again as a Russian Mennonite,[1] I was an outsider to the repertoires of English-language gospel songs and to many of the hymns practiced at Holyrood Mennonite Church. In each church I was also an outsider in terms of being an observer, and an insider in terms of being a participant who was included in the social and musical life of the church.

Degrees of insider status have not often been explored in ethnomusicology; the prevailing notion has been of the fieldworker as outsider *or* an insider. However, a recent article by Chou Chiener (2002) examines in new detail the processes of fieldwork by an insider. Chiener's most interesting observation concerns the difference between being an insider to a tradition, as in a part of that tradition, and being an insider researcher of a tradition (Chiener, 2002, 457; 465). As a learner in her tradition of Taiwanese folk music, Chiener was subject to the rules of the tradition, the teacher-student hierarchy and respect and patience required of the student, in a way that she was not when she returned as a fieldworker. As an insider researcher, the motives and questions which other insiders assumed her to have changed as her role changed from native musician to fieldworker. As such, she learned different things in the two roles – she had quicker access to more detailed information about the music as a fieldworker, but learned more information about processes of learning and social organization as a native learner. Outsider ethnomusicologists Chiener observed were treated as one step further removed; they had the quickest link to upper level musicians and their musical knowledge, in part because these fieldworkers made the most social mistakes and did not respect social rules which an insider, even as a fieldworker, would know and respect. To summarize, degrees of outsiderness correlate to an ability to learn quickly about the music without learning the social dynamics of the music's context.

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[1] As I discussed in the preface, I am half Swiss Mennonite. However, I have been a member of mostly Russian Mennonite churches for much of my childhood and adult life, and of course I grew up in the Russian Mennonite context of Southern Manitoba.

Chiener's conclusions concerning the insider researcher have some resonance with my own experiences. Like Chiener, I struggled to conceptualize the field as a site of ethnomusicological research rather than simply where I live my life, where I go to church. Like Chiener I also experienced a difference between being a native learner or teacher and an ethnomusicological researcher in the field, in part due to the differences in the way others saw me in this role.

I felt this most strongly at Holyrood, then my home church, though it was a subtle difference: I believe that since people saw me as evaluating the church's musical practices, they were more interested in sharing their viewpoints with me concerning these practices. I became a sounding board, in a new way, for concerns and understandings of music among participants who remained an important social / friendship community for me. I also felt constrained, not only in doing fieldwork in ways which would intrude on worship, but also in expressing personal opinions concerning controversies in which Holyrood took part. For example, though I felt strongly about a divisive issue in the Mennonite church at the time of research, I was afraid that expressing my position concerning this ongoing debate would jeopardize my position as a fieldworker, feeling that people who disagreed with my position would not as easily trust me given this difference and so would be reticent to share their views on music with me.

In terms of fieldwork, then, I experienced the opposite of what is often described by traditional fieldworkers. While traditional fieldworkers, through setting up teacher-student relationships for example (Qureshi, 2003), experience the strange becoming familiar, that is through immersion in the field they begin to see themselves as part of it, I experienced the familiar becoming strange. By becoming a fieldworker, I and others saw my role differently and so the familiar social world of church became the field to me. In my role as fieldworker, I became more of an outsider than I had been before.

Chiener (2002, 481) also suggests that because a native researcher may find the line between themselves as part of field and as detached observer to be unclear, native researchers may have a more profound impact on the field than outsider researchers do. I suspect that I may also have had some impact on the field, although this is impossible to verify. A personal interest for me in this project was sharing my observations not only with the world of ethnomusicological and Mennonite studies academics, but also with the people who were part of the churches, since each church had many things in common with the other church but at times resented and critiqued the other church's musical practice. I hoped to share a view of how each church's world worked as a system – and so to increase understanding between these groups of people. Because I had the opportunity to present my findings, as a sermon at First Mennonite and as an afternoon discussion at Holyrood Mennonite, I hope that I at least contributed to some conversations in each church concerning their own musical practices and their relationship to others.

Several differences between my fieldwork experience and that of much other insider research exist as well. Perhaps the most prominent difference is that my fieldwork is placed in a multi-disciplinary frame, in which one of the disciplines, Mennonite studies, is composed largely of insiders. This is different from most insider research and from other ethnomusicological research where strong, even familial, bonds and as such strong relationships and responsibilities are formed between fieldworker and field – such as a guru-disciple relationship. Qureshi (2003) describes the reaction of her North Indian music teachers concerning her publication of observations gleaned from knowledge which they shared with her – the response being that the kinds of knowledge shared were for her, and her observations were a new kind of knowledge to be shared with others. Her teachers respected her work, and felt it needed to be shared with her scholarly community and, though in very significant ways she was part of their community, her scholarly community was distinct from theirs.

In other words, while outsiders and some other insider researchers have done their fieldwork "in the field" but addressed their findings to a different audience – Western ethnomusicologists – my findings are addressed to insiders as well as outsiders. Mennonite studies as a field does not explicitly privilege insider status; however, such status is the norm for researchers and for their audiences in this field. This complicated the processes of writing, since Mennonites will be interested in different findings than will ethnomusicologists. Dividing my own responses to the field into categories which might be interesting to both, or to one or the other audience, entailed some compromises in the writing. Also, because I am a part of both fields in my reading and participation in scholarly communities, my own perspectives were influenced by the understandings of communities and expressive culture to be found in both fields.

In general, I believe these compromises, in terms of emphases in writing, have been settled on the side of the ethnomusicologist, in the belief that such a perspective might be useful and interesting to Mennonites as well. However, certain discussions – such as this present discussion of insider research – might make little sense, I suspect, to the Mennonite reader. I limited descriptions of my own experiences of worship, for example, in different contexts in deference to practices which characterize much ethnomusicological writing. In other words, the disciplinary audiences for this research influenced my writing.

Ethnomusicology has paid a good deal of attention to insider terms differentiating musical practices which might seem very similar to outsiders (Feld, 1988). However, one difficulty I encountered in writing this dissertation was differentiating for my readers groups which seemed to them to be similar.

I would suggest that an insider perspective can shed light on differences within a group or related groups which would not be as obvious to an outsider ethnomusicologist or anthropologist. For example, having grown up with a knowledge of differences of ethnic origin, different histories of migration and domicile, and different languages, food and folkways, between Russian and Swiss (ethnic) Mennonites, the difference between the groups is apparent to me. These distinctions clearly matter to other insiders, as they were discussed by participants and figured in musical practices. How are social differences defined if not through social practice? As Brass (1991, 18) has argued, an objective definition of a social group (i.e. a group with social differences from another group) is nearly impossible to arrive at and so is theoretically untenable; boundaries between groups are socially defined.

However, I am also aware that insiders would see these two groups as a single group in some contexts, and would also emphasize multi-ethnicity within the religious category of "Mennonite" beyond these two historic groups. Furthermore, the primary location for group identity which I identified in this study is the *congregation* – which in no case was equivalent to an enclave with members of one ethnic group. In other words, though distinctions exist between the groups which would satisfy an ethnomusicologist as real or important, connections are made between groups which would make classification difficult for the outsider ethnomusicologist.

As an insider, I have ties to many different groups and an experience of shifting identity in different contexts which can shed some light on the multiple registers of identity which come into play in the life of such groups. Perhaps it is the contribution of insider research to throw into sharpest relief the issue that more complex theories of identity, besides group member versus outsider, must be considered.

## 8.3 A final note

After several years of living in Edmonton, and worshipping with and pursuing fieldwork at each of the primary churches involved in this study, my sense of any single and immutable social and musical Mennonite centre not only between but within each of these groups has eroded. Instead, I found that music in these churches articulates a diverse, multilocal network wherein the identity of the church is multiply positioned and upon which the identity of geographically greater Mennonite groups and affiliations is mapped and remapped. Furthermore, this network includes a number of places and spaces which would not be marked as Mennonite. Music here functions as "pathways of song," as Ruth Finnegan (1989) would have it: musical routes articulating an identity, which are travelled and which change, that is, a contemporary map of the relationships in which each church is enmeshed.

At the same time, this music expresses "the memories of songs" as novelist Rudy Wiebe so elegantly puts it, in the sense of both an ethnic originary memory of a centre for Mennonite identity and in the sense of the memories of changes in the church which are held together by these songs.[2]

External negotiation and navigation of identity, and internal social structures and shared meaning and memory, come together as an expression of a vital community among the Edmonton Mennonite churches. For me, this community became real in singing as part of a community in a particular church's worship service and among the polyphony of voices which come together when the different churches sing together.

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[2] Rudy Wiebe's "Sailing to Danzig" is an evocative short story capturing this Mennonite historical consciousness, following a young Mennonite man's imagination to his distant ancestor in Danzig, and concluding "Wybe Adam von Harlingen, where are you now? ... Only the memories of songs remain." (Wiebe, 1995, 289)

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# Appendix A

# Consent form for interviewees

To the participants in this study:

I am a graduate student at the University of Alberta. My doctoral dissertation (in process) is about the meaningful practice of church music at three Edmonton Mennonite congregations. I am interviewing persons involved with music at each of these churches to learn more about how music is practiced at each of these churches, and what the practice of that music means to people at each of these churches.

As a participant in this study, I will ask you to participate in a half-hour to one-hour interview (in person, via the telephone, or by email), which with your permission will be audio-recorded (except in the case of an email interview). The interview questions will focus on your role in the musical life of your congregation, and your experience of music at your congregation. If you wish, I will provide you with a copy of a list of questions, which will form the majority of my interview questions, prior to the interview so that you can evaluate whether or not you would like to participate and / or prepare for the interview. In particular cases, I may ask for your permission to interview you a second time, in a follow-up interview.

The interviews will form an important part of my dissertation; they will be intermixed in presenting the practice and experience of music at each Edmonton Mennonite church. Pseudonyms, rather than the real names of participants, will be used in any direct quotations in the dissertation.

You may withdraw from the interview process at any time. You may also withdraw your consent for the interview, or any portions of the interview, to be used in my dissertation (prior to the binding of the dissertation).

In signing this form, you are agreeing to make no financial or legal claim against me for the use of your interview material in this dissertation, nor against the University of Alberta.

I — have read and understood the above statement and agree to participate as an interviewee under the conditions above.

— Signature of participant

— Signature of interviewer

— Date

# Appendix B

# Questions for interviewees

Do you feel like you have a "say" in what music is sung or performed at your Edmonton Mennonite Church?

How do you express your opinions about what music is performed at your Edmonton Mennonite Church?

Is it a part of your role as a (pastoral leader / congregational member/ music leader etc.) to participate in either leading music or picking musical repertoire at your Edmonton Mennonite Church?

Do others express their opinions to you about music at your Edmonton Mennonite Church (in your capacity as a pastoral leader / congregational member/ music leader etc.?) Does music at your Edmonton Mennonite Church reflect your preferences in terms of church music?

Why or why not?

When has your Edmonton Mennonite Churchs music reflected your preferences? Be specific.

When hasn't your Edmonton Mennonite Churchs music reflected your preferences? Be specific?

How has your Edmonton Mennonite Churchs musical tradition changed over the years? How would you evaluate these changes?

How actively do you see yourself participating in the musical life of your Edmonton Mennonite Church?

Do you sing as a congregational participant in music at your Edmonton Mennonite Church?

In your opinion, what are the main styles or kinds of music performed at your Edmonton Mennonite Church?

What are the important features of style (x)?

Where do these styles come from?

Do you feel more comfortable singing one type of music or another?

What does it feel like to listen to these different styles of music? (Do people sing louder or quieter? More emotional or less emotional? etc.)

What, in short, is the role of the (pastoral leader / congregational member/ music leader etc.) in music at your Edmonton Mennonite Church?

# Appendix C

# List of Songs and Sources

## C.1 Chapter 2

"O Lord, our Lord, how Majestic." Text and tune Michael W. Smith, 1981. Arranged Martha Hershberger 1990. Text and music copyright ©1981; this arrangement copyright ©1990 Meadowgreen Music Co. *Hymnal: A Worship Book* #112

## C.2 Chapter 4

"We Will Sing for Joy" by Alessandro Scarlatti. Arranger unknown.

"Abide with me." Text Henry F. Lyte, 1847. Tune William H. Monk, 1861. *Hymnal: A Worship Book* #653

"Go Now In Peace." Text and music Natalie Sleeth, copyright ©1976 Hinshaw Music, Inc. *Hymnal: A Worship Book* #429

"We Gather Together." Text and tune *Nederlandtsche Gedenkclank*, 1626. *Hymnal: A Worship Book* #17

"O Thou in Whose Presence," Text Joseph Swain, 1791; tune *Christian Lyre*, 1831, harm. J. Harold Moyer 1965. Harmonization copyright 1969 Faith and Life Press / Mennonite Publishing House. *Hymnal: A Worship Book* #559

"Lord, You Sometimes Speak in Wonders," Text Christopher Idle, 1966, copyright ©1969 Hope Publishing Co.; tune Christopher Johnson, 1987, copyright ©1988 Christopher Johnson. *Hymnal: A Worship Book* #594

"You are salt for the earth," Text and tune Marty Haugen, 1985. Text and tune copyright ©1986 G.I.A. Publications, Inc. *Hymnal: A Worship Book* #226

"Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow." Text Thomas Ken, 1695. Tune Boston Handel and Haydn Society Collection, 1830. *Hymnal: A Worship Book* #118

"Friedensfurst." Traditional Russian Mennonite Christmas song.

## C.3 Chapter 5

"Glory, Honor, Power," by Danny Daniels, copyright ©1991 Vineyard Ministries International

"King of Love," by Kevin Johnson, copyright ©1997 Kingsway's Thankyou Music.

"His Love Endures Forever," by Dean Clark, copyright ©1994 Mercy / Vineyard.

"How Deep the Father's Love for Us," by Stuart Townsend, copyright ©1995 Kingsway's Thankyou Music.

"I Will Rise Up," by Michael Ash, copyright ©1999 Maranatha Music.

## C.4 Chapter 6

"Once Again," by Matt Redman, copyright ©1995 Kingsway's Thankyou Music.

"What Wondrous Love is This," Text *Cluster of Spiritual Songs* 1823; tune *Southern Harmony* 1840. Harmonized 1966 Alice Parker. Harmonization copyright ©1966 Alice Parker. *Hymnal: A Worship Book* #530

"Let the Whole Creation Cry," Text Stopford A. Brooke 1881; tune Robert Williams 1817. *Hymnal: A Worship Book* #51

"Bwana awabariki," Text and music Swahili folk hymn. *Hymnal: A Worship Book* #422

"Christ is our cornerstone." Text *Angularis fundamentum lapis*, 6-7th century, trans. John Chandler *Hymns of the Primitive Church* 1837. Tune John Darwall, 1770. *Hymnal: A Worship Book* #43

"Gentle shepherd, come and lead us." Text Gloria Gaither, 1974. Tune William J. Gaither, 1974. Text and tune copyright ©1974 William J. Gaither.

## C.5 Chapter 7

"Lord I Lift Your Name on High." by Rick Founds, copyright ©1989 Maranatha Music

"Jesus Died on Calvary's Mountain." folk hymn arranged by Robert Shaw / Alice Parker, 1970.

"O Sacred Head Now Wounded." Text Paul Gerhardt, 1656, trans. James W. Alexander 1861. Tune Hans L. Hassler, 1601; harm. J.S. Bach, 1729.

# Appendix D

# Glossary of Terms

*blended worship (service):* a type of worship service using both popular music and hymns, following a modified traditional order of service

*camp songs:* folk-style Christian popular music used in worship but usually not during Sunday worship in church, named for its use in times of worship at Mennonite summer camps for children

*Canadian Mennonite University (CMU):* the university of Mennonite Church Canada, located in Winnipeg, Manitoba; composed of three formerly independent colleges, Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Concord College and Menno Simons College

*Canadian Mennonite Conference:* the former General Conference Mennonite Church conference of Canada; now Mennonite Church Canada

*choruses:* a generic term for popular-music songs used in Christian worship (also specifically this music from the 1970s and 1980s)

*conference:* organizations connecting churches across broad areas (provinces, states, nations); conferences often have a governing function for non-conformist churches, and meet yearly as a conference body to decide on policies and statements of faith for churches in the conference area

*contemporary worship (service):* a type of worship service using popular music, usually following an order of service beginning with a block of songs and then a sermon

*contemporary worship music:* popular Christian music (from the late 1990s and 2000s)

*evangelical / evangelicalism:* non-conformist Protestants holding some beliefs related to fundamentalism, but with distinctively strong emphases on evangelism and thus engagement with society (including politics) and on connecting Biblicism and other fundamental beliefs with contemporary (popular) culture *gathering hymn:* a hymn sung at the beginning of a traditional worship service, the text of which often reflects on the church as a worship community

*General Conference (GC) Mennonite Church:* a former North American conference of Mennonites; now part of Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA

*hymn of response:* a hymn sung following the sermon during a traditional worship service

*hymn of sending:* a hymn sung immediately before or after or in place of the benediction during a traditional worship service

*Iona:* a Christian worship community writing new liturgies and songs, located in Scotland

*Mennonite Brethren:* a historically Russian Mennonite group, distinctive in that Mennonite Brethren are evangelical

*Mennonite Central Committee (MCC):* an inter-Mennonite global development agency (NGO)

*Mennonite Church (MC) Conference:* a former North American Mennonite conference; now part of Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA

*Mennonite Church Canada:* a national Mennonite conference in Canada

*Mennonite Church USA:* a national Mennonite conference in the USA

*ministerial:* the group of ministers for a given area, such as the "Mennonite ministerial of Edmonton"

*praise and worship music:* a generic term for popular Christian music (also specifically this music from the 1980s and early 1990s)

*praise band:* the popular-music instrumental ensemble which leads and accompanies singing in choruses, praise and worship and contemporary worship music, usually composed of singers, guitars, drums and keyboards

*Russian Mennonites:* Mennonites originating in the Netherlands, but having emigrated to North America from Russia

*songleader:* the conductor for hymns in a traditional worship service

*Swiss Mennonites:* Mennonites originating in Switzerland

*Taize:* a Christian worship community writing new liturgies and songs, located in France

*traditional worship (service):* a worship service employing hymns and classical music, often following an order of gathering hymns, praise hymns, scriptures, sermon, hymn of response, sending hymn, benediction *worship leader:* in a traditional worship service, the person leading the service, doing readings, introducing hymns, et cetera; in a contemporary worship service, the leader of the praise band

*youth:* adolescent church members in junior high and high school